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THE IVY HEDGE

BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN



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THE IVY HEDGE

CHAPTER I

"IT's all over!" George Trevanion said. "But now for the worst!" He had not seen Mary Coyne since the day before the funeral of her father, except during those moments in the church and at the grave. She had been occupied by her mother and the children. He had only exchanged a few words with her about the practical side of the sad occasion—which was the commonest thing in life; but, for all in this little group, it was most uncommon, most amazing, most unexpected. To them it seemed miraculous that the husband and father should die. This death appeared so wonderful, so out of the common, so earth-rending, that for the time he—to whom Mary Coyne seemed all the world—was as an alien; indeed, as he saw the daughter clasp the mother in a passion of love and sorrow, he felt that he must always be apart. There could be no love like this. It was an odd and unsatisfactory feeling for him. The worst was to come, he knew. There must occur the struggle between love and duty—a duty in which love, as he had very lately discovered, held a great part.

The family had come back to the little house in New Jersey, almost one of the suburbs of New York. Mr. Coyne had always boasted of this little house. He had been born in Philadelphia,

and he had an inherited dislike to "flats." It was partly his own property, and the garden at the rear had been his delight. Other men might live in a few rooms in the city, but rather an hour's journey every day than exist in one of those crannies of another man's house!

The autumn sunshine, warmly golden, poured into the windows of the front parlor. There was a spicy scent in the air. On one side somebody was burning dried leaves; on the other, a neighbor woman, who had just time to change her funeral black, was making ketchup in her back garden. This homely perfume, striking the nostrils of the mourning group that loved homely ways, seemed to be a note of added desolation.

Trevanion did not speak to Mary; he merely clasped her hand; but he kissed the poor, starved cheek of her mother. Mary's face glowed as he did it; it was like him. Amy, who was just over sixteen, clung to his arm. Hubert and Walter brightened as he entered. These boys of eleven and ten were sorry enough; but they welcomed anything that would break the intolerable strain of the last few hours. Hubert had begun to play with the cat, and Amy had asked him softly how he could do it. This abashed him. He could only look before him, and let the tears drop from his round, white-lashed eyes upon his knuckles.

"Go into the garden and walk about," Trevanion said, taking pity on the wretchedness of the boys.

They rose and looked doubtfully at him.

"Go," he added; "but walk about slowly."

They obeyed gladly. The motherly woman who

was making the ketchup called to them. All their lives—though they forgot many more important things—they remembered that in their time of utter misery she made them sit on a barrel under her grapevine arbor, and gave them bread and raspberry jam. They were grateful for her thoughtfulness in hiding them in the grapevine arbor. They had a sense of guilt in eating publicly so soon after their father's death. They had not begun really to miss him yet. The preacher had said something about his being a part of all beautiful things in the earth and a link in the chain of eternal love. They had not understood at all; but his words made them think that things were not so bad, after all—and for the moment the bread and jam gave them vague comfort.

And something like vague comfort came to Mrs. Coyne as Mary, having disappeared for a few moments, brought in a teapot and some biscuits. Trevanion hastened to arrange the cups on the cherry-colored center table. Trevanion knew that Mary was glad of something to do in order to avoid the necessity for speaking.

"The worst is to come!" he said to himself. He looked with kind brown eyes at Mary and her mother. He was a man of the average height, with shoulders almost too broad. His bushy eyebrows were contracted a little. He tried to smile, but he could not. He was a man who deserved the epithet sturdy—a man not particularly attractive to look at, but whose eyes and whose general attitude inspired trust in children and those who knew how to judge men. One could

see that his convictions were as deep as his feelings were intense.

"Ah," said Mrs. Coyne, as Mary removed her black bonnet and deep-black crepe veil, "it is good to be at home!" her voice trembled.

Trevanion handed her a cup of tea.

"I hope Mrs. Simpson's veil is not too much rumpled. It was good of her to lend it to me. Death is always so sudden! There is never any time to prepare. *We* never thought of having black ready——"

"At times like these, people are glad to be kind. Drink your tea, Mrs. Coyne."

"O George—and the wedding! It will have to be postponed—for a time at least."

The worst had come.

"Mother!" Mary spoke clearly. "We can not be married now. George knows it. And while we're in such deep sorrow, that nothing can make it worse, let's talk——"

She did not finish the sentence; she went out of the room, and they heard her crying in the kitchen. Amy hastily followed her sister.

"Why, the flat is furnished! What does she mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Coyne. "It was to be next month."

"It means," answered Trevanion, "that she will not marry me now."

His eyes still looked kind, but his mouth was shut tight, and his eyebrows almost met.

"Not now, of course! It would not look well. The only comfort I've had during this horrible time is the thought that I could go over to you

and Mary during the long winter evenings. I couldn't stay here."

Trevanion's eyes were even kinder. The lips twitched a little. What of those happy winter evenings he had dreamed of? A chill, a fever, and the breadwinner of this family had gone! The death of this good-natured, routine-loving, middle-aged man had made such a difference to them all. His home had seemed so secure—its simple comfort rooted in the soil. Trevanion shuddered as he realized how hopeless it was to fight against the Great Power. This term flashed through his mind; he had ceased to be a Methodist, as his people had been, and he could give that Force, so implacable to him, no other name.

"There will be no long, happy evenings for us, I am afraid," he said, removing Mrs. Coyne's crepe-trimmed coat from a chair. "Mary has written (she says she couldn't tell me without breaking down) that we can not be married."

Mrs. Coyne sank back in her cane-seated rocking-chair; a dull flush came to her cheeks.

"Why?"

"She must tell you herself."

The voices of the boys came in from the neighbor's garden. The kind neighbor, going about her business, had noticed that, the bread and jam finished, they had sat very still.

"We can't play. It would not be right to play," Hubert said. "We must do nothing. It's only polite to dad not to play." He blinked his nearsighted eyes. "We could work, of course," he added, as he saw an earthworm crawl from under a cabbage stalk in the tiny vegetable

garden. "We could dig for worms. That would help mother, too. Everybody says we must help mother now, and we could keep the worms to go fishing with. I heard Mrs. Marsh say, 'Poor Mrs. Coyne! There won't be much meat going into that house now.'"

Walter nodded.

"But we can't dig worms with our best clothes on."

Mrs. Marsh turned suddenly from her kettle of tomatoes.

"You boys go right off home, put on your old clothes, and dig up my cabbage stalks at once!"

They ran off to obey. Their voices floated into the parlor, where their mother sat, appalled by the opening of a new view of life. The strange pitiless light entering her mind made her forget the propriety of checking the loud voices of the children. Amy, tearful but practical, was in the kitchen, making preparations for supper. Mary followed her and stood at the window trying to gather courage to go back to the parlor. Dark of hair, blue of eyes, thin, graceful and alert, she had lost her expression of energy without losing that air of distinction that cut her off in appearance from her rather commonplace brothers and sisters.

Amy rattled the dishes a little—anything to break the horrible stillness of the house. The arrangement of eggs and frizzled dried beef did not necessitate so much bustle.

"If people could only die without having funerals!" Amy said. "The light in the windows on the white walls, and the terrible smell of tube-

roses, and 'Beulahland' strung out so long by the choir; and Mr. Jensen talking about dad as if he were an old friend, and saying that dad was in heaven, when I do not know whether dad believed in heaven or not——"

"Whether dad believed in heaven or not—and people don't always talk about what they believe —it doesn't alter the fact that there is a heaven, Amy," Mary said in a muffled voice.

"There ought to be," replied Amy; "for it's bad enough to live through days like these. Besides, I'm not going to believe things simply because Mr. Jensen says them."

"You are too young to talk like that," said Mary wearily.

"I don't care!" answered Amy, beginning to cry. "I like Bridget's way best. When she came in just now for the washing, she said: 'Your father was a good man, and you'll miss him; but he's in God's hands, and the children and myself will just say a prayer for him to the Blessed Mother to remind her Son of his goodness to you all.' There's something in that," said Amy. "It's homely and human. Mr. Jensen talked about hell, too; and he seemed to think that father might be in hell, only he always paid his debts. He used those very words!"

"Oh, you're not well, Amy! Mr. Jensen was kind, but he couldn't be expected to know what would suit us. It was good of him, a stranger, to make such a sermon about a man he didn't know."

"Then he shouldn't have said anything. It is like lying to say that dad wanted to go to heaven,

when we know he just wanted to stay here with us. Oh," cried Amy, "I hate everything!"

"Just fix your mind on frizzing that dried beef," returned Mary, "and you'll not have time to hate anybody."

Amy was old for her age, and given to great directness of thought and expression. She was a sturdy-looking girl, with the light hair and blue eyes of her father. The almost albino color of Hubert was turned into red gold in her hair and eyelashes, which were very long, and accentuated the rose tint of her cheeks. She looked as if she might have what is called "character." She had adored her father; her mother she loved, but not in the same way.

Mary felt that she must go back to the parlor. The worst was to come! She opened the door and went in. A shadow of dusk was in the room. The mission furniture, the pride of her mother's life, looked very somber; and the black of the crepe intensified the air of gloom.

"George," she said, speaking softly, "have you made mother understand?"

"I don't quite understand myself," he answered, rising.

"Well, mother," Mary said, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "I am to stay with you. George must wait. But what's the use of saying that? I can never marry him, and I'll never marry anybody else. Mother, I must help take care of you."

"Oh, is that all?" Mrs. Coyne seemed much relieved. "Don't mind me. We can get on somehow."

"How, mother?" asked Mary softly.

"Oh, somehow!"

Mary made a gesture of despair.

"I can surely do something," Mrs. Coyne said, in a remonstrating tone. "I'm only forty-five, and hale and hearty. I'll find a place. You go right on and marry her, George. Why, everything is ready except the wedding dress. And I guess that Mary and I will have plenty of time to make it, now we're in mourning and can't go out much."

Trevanion advanced and took Mary's cold little hand.

"Your mother is right. We'll try it, and we can help one another."

Mary's heart leaped, as she saw the glow in his eyes and the twisting up of those rather tight lips in a smile.

"Oh George," she said, "I wish we could! It's not courage that I lack, but foolhardiness. You've your father and mother to help, and I have—these——"

"Mrs. Marsh says can't we stay to supper; she's going to have shortcakes," Walter's shrill voice called through the open window.

"Yes, go; and thank Mrs. Marsh," Mary answered, while looking at her mother for permission.

"These!" Mary continued. "Father has left a small life insurance and a mortgaged house. He worked all his life—hard. He kept us in shoes" (Mary's voice trembled a little) "when his own were full of holes. He had a great pride in his family, and he wanted us to be as nice as

his neighbors' children. He had no pleasures, no entertainments, except his pipe" (Mary's voice took a little whimsical drop) "in which we did not share. He was in the prime of life, and he earned a thousand dollars a year. It's gone, and we've got to live. And we can't live on you, George."

"You can! You——"

"Think of the shoes, George!" she said, with that touch of humor which he liked, though he found it strange; it was part of her.

"Your father and I have certainly worked hard," broke in Mrs. Coyne, "and hand and hand —oh, I can't stand it!" She rocked to and fro.

Mary went on:

"I must take father's place."

"It's a rotten state of affairs!" Trevanion exclaimed, his brows growing blacker and his eyes gleaming. "A man's reward ought to be proportionate to the energy he puts into things, and not to the mere profits he takes out. And a woman's," he looked at Mrs. Coyne, who was wiping a tear from the lap of her dress, "to the way she acts as a wife and a mother. Here's a woman with helpless children, left to the mercy of the world, simply because she has been a good wife and mother and shirked none of her duties. Her very children are her worst anxieties. How shall she feed them? And *we* who want so little are to be kept apart—kept from our natural life and duties—by *that*. It's rotten, I say—it's rotten!"

"We want so little!" Mary cried passionately, putting her hand on Trevanion's shoulder.

"It would be worse if the children were smaller," sighed Mrs. Coyne, trying to find some hope in what seemed to her a whirlwind of despair. "Now we can manage somehow."

"*Somehow,* mother! It was easy enough to say that when father lived. Then there was something to live on. Now there's only the little bit of sewing that I can do, between us and—well, orphan asylums for the boys, and a place as cash girl in some shop, at three dollars a week, for Amy. It's not that I object to any kind of work. But think of Amy, with no chance for school, a little drudge, at everybody's call, mixing in New York with the scum of creation, and learning their ways! I will keep the home together somehow."

Mrs. Coyne's face brightened.

"Of course we will!"

Mary knew the extent of her mother's abilities; she went over and kissed her.

"Poor mother," she said to herself, "she doesn't know what is before her!"

Trevanion looked at the group, with bitterness in his heart. The helpless mother and children stood between him and happiness. And yet, with the responsibilities already on his hands, those hands were too full. What could Mary do to support her mother and keep the boys at school. She was capable as a home maker, he knew that; but the quality of home making is above all price, and therefore has no value in the commercial world. He had seen her in her own household long enough to know her capacity in that line. His old people and his sister, a help-

less cripple in a sanitarium, must be helped. He would have managed this and made a pleasant little home for Mary, as well; but, with twelve hundred a year—the height of his earning capacity for some years to come—to do more was impossible.

"Nevertheless," he said, continuing his own thought, "we'll join forces and face the world together. Come, Mary, let's take the risk!"

"No." Mary looked very firm, yet very unhappy. "Father had a thousand dollars a year when he died; but it was only sufficient—with interest, with the expenses of the life insurance, with" (a little gleam came into Mary's eyes at the thought of the inevitable demand) "shoes! There was hardly ever a tiny surplus. You do not know how careful we've always been. Mother's baked her own bread, and made over her feather beds, and mended and mended! You have to be old-fashioned to save anything. No, it would be such a fight that you and I would soon grow old and hopeless, and be glad of death as a rest. And, besides, George, you must not get overburdened, as you would be, and made feeble by care. You couldn't *demand* anything. You'd have to submit to all kinds of exactions. People would take advantage of you. If I can give the boys a little more schooling, and have Amy taught something, I'll be glad; but I'll not let her be thrown with common people, or be brought up on charity."

"The State ought to help in a case like this—ours is a rotten system, I say!" exclaimed Trevanion.

The smell of Amy's cooking permeated the room.

"Well, we must eat," said Mrs. Coyne, her color coming back. This war of words had been suddenly forgotten at the thought that Amy's toast was not always up to the mark. This brought back her courage. "I'll have the toast ready in a few minutes, George; you must stay with us and have supper."

When Mrs. Coyne had left the room, Trevanion seized Mary by both arms.

"I will not give you up!"

"I will not give *you* up—in my heart, George," she answered, clinging to him. "I shall keep your ring—not on my finger, for it does not bind you."

She took the little gold band, with the three turquoises, and showed it to him.

"Mary, Mary, it *must* bind you!" he said. "I'm bound!"

"No, you are free," she said. "You must be free to run your race; but I, being a woman, will remain bound, because——"

"Because?"

"Because I can not change!"

"And you think I can change, Mary!" he cried, pushing her from him. "You do not know me—you have never known me! O Mary, let us be together! I don't mind struggling. My life's been a struggle. Let us choose love while we're young. Don't wait. Be my wife at once, Mary!"

The door burst open breezily.

"We had shortcakes and quince jam!" cried

the boys, forgetful of all except that agreeable fact.

Mary turned her head aside. She answered him by taking the engagement ring from her finger and putting it into the bosom of her dress. He knew that, for the moment at least, he was answered. From all practical points of view, he knew, too, that she was right; but this did not lessen his resentment, which flashed up for an instant against her; but it died down. All his bitterness turned against the circumstances that had made his and her fate so hard. Trevanion could find neither alleviation nor hope in the prospect.

CHAPTER II

TREVANION was the only son of a Cornish workman who had come over thirty years ago, as an expert in tin. When the boy was fifteen years of age, an accident had occurred in the factory: the father's right hand was irrevocably injured, and he was made useless for the rest of his life, as the shock had in some way affected the nerves of the head and stomach.

Trevanion's mother, a thrifty Welshwoman, had brought the boy up as well as she could. She had taught him to read the Bible, to follow the principles and practices of her very strict Evangelical sect, and to work hard. As he had to work hard to live, this was not difficult. His only regret was that his hard work, begun at the age of fifteen, had interfered with his education; for he loved books. His father had lapsed into gentle senility. He was not old, but the hurt had aged him prematurely. His mother was as tireless as electricity, and as fiercely energetic as a sea gull. Her black eyes flashed with interest in life, and her housekeeping was daily carried on with all the zest—and some of the noise—of battle. But she was showing signs of the struggle. She was tremendously proud of her son, and, like an old bird that sees her young able to feed themselves, delighted that he should make a nest of his own.

The manufacturers had given the maimed workman, her husband, three hundred dollars,

and this nearly paid his doctor's bill. He might have secured more in a court of law, but he dared not attempt a suit; for he knew that, while all men, theoretically, are equal, there are few countries in the world where human beings are so unequal before the law as in the United States. So he had been obliged to drift through life with no right hand to use on any rudder, dependent first on the proceeds of the little sweet-shop kept by his wife, and then on what his son could spare from his weekly earnings in the sewing-machine factory.

Trevanion's rigid evangelical training, worked in with no unsparing hand by his mother, had done two great things for him: it had given him self-control, and a horror of those sins of the flesh which are more and more condoned as Modernism eats into the old sects; and it had taught him to regard the telling of the truth as a scrupulous duty. On the other hand, as he grew older and read widely, he doubted the grounds of the creed in which every fiber of that valiant woman, his mother, rejoiced. The Bible, texts of which were always on her lips, became in his eyes an idol, worshipped blindly. Some of the texts, constantly misapplied and evidently misinterpreted, made him impatient, especially when used by some of his mother's favorite preachers—often ignorant Englishmen or Welshmen—dropped for reasons from dissenting parishes at home.

If Trevanion had been asked what influence had made him cease to be a Christian, he would have boldly answered (provided the old people

were not about), "The Bible." Worthy of respect as Trevanion was, it must be admitted that, in the beginning, he had been influenced by some of that literature of unbelief which had its origin in the Seventies, and which is now sold in cheap editions. But of late he had seen through its elaborate hypotheses, so dogmatically stated; and he based his objections to the Bible as a rule of life on its inadequacy to serve as a rule of *his* life. His mother—his father was no longer an active intelligence—looked on him as a wandering sheep that would return to the fold.

Mary Coyne did not trouble herself about his creed. She went to church occasionally, preferably to a Methodist church. Her father had been a Methodist clergyman—one of those wandering beings, poor and dependent, well-intentioned and meek, neither a good preacher nor a very practical manager in matters which concerned his various missions. He married young, and after that he had traveled from one small place to another. His wife helped him with all her might; but every change seemed to make them poorer and poorer, and even the contributions of the kindly at donation parties could not be stretched far enough to keep the growing family comfortable. Many a time, when these festivals were over, poor Mrs. Coyne sought hopefully for shoes among the piles of packages left in the kitchen; but shoes were seldom presented to the pastor's family.

At last Mr. Coyne, distrustful of his gifts as a preacher, had entered as a clerk, the one bookstore of this little New Jersey town, and there he had remained until his death. He gradually

threw off all his old beliefs, and it was the Unitarian minister of the place who officiated at his funeral. Mrs. Coyne remained faithful. She sang the old hymns with fervor, and applied herself to the Bible in all moments of doubt or fear or affliction or fatigue; and she found great consolation in this practice.

Now at the supper table, in the presence of the tragedy of the two lives near her, she began an "impromptu" prayer, which she often rehearsed to the boys, her sons, as she put them to bed. Amy listened with admiration to her mother's eloquence, and admired her artless attitude of great intimacy with the Creator, to whom she often offered advice, drawn mostly from her reading in the Old Testament. Amy always felt better and more hopeful after one of these prayers; for she had a great respect for her mother's judgment, and she devoutly believed, if Providence took her mother's wisdom seriously, all would go well with the world.

Mrs. Coyne tried to be cheerful during the meal.

"Dear, dear!" she said, "it's a pleasure to have so many pleasant things to remember about *him*. He," she went on rapidly, "was a great favorite with the congregations that could appreciate him. I was always a drag on him—I know it now. You see, it is hard for a Methodist minister's wife to fulfil all her duties and look after her children properly. It wasn't always possible to have a hired girl. Sometimes we could not afford one, and sometimes we felt that the poorer people would think we were 'stuck up' if we had

one. I am often tempted to believe that religion doesn't change human nature as much as it ought to, and some of the most jealous people I have ever known were professing Christians. But how I love to think of the old days, when he'd help me wash up the dishes—with the curtains down, for fear any of the congregation would see him without his black coat! And how glad he was when the folks donated something that wasn't absolutely necessary! I think he was more grateful for the big ostrich feather fan that old Mrs. Winston—at Burgrave City you know—gave me than for all the useful things we ever got. She said she thought that a minister's wife ought to have a useless trifle occasionally, like other women. But it wasn't useless. The feathers trimmed a good many of my hats, and I think Mary remembers them on some of her own."

Mrs. Coyne actually laughed, and Mary joined her faintly.

"And how jolly he was when he was alone with me!" resumed the mother. "He had to be solemn before folks, because he was afraid that they wouldn't respect him. Some ministers get on by telling funny stories, but, though your father was full of them, he was timid about telling them, because he was afraid that what might seem funny to him wouldn't seem funny to other people. I never felt that way when he was about to say a comical thing. I always knew by the expression of his face, and I couldn't help laughing. I often laughed so much that he said I couldn't have heard the story."

For the first time Trevanion smiled and tore

himself from his thoughts. He had been trying in his mind to make a lighted path through the gloom of the future. He must submit to Mary's decision for the moment—yes! But this only gave fuel to the anger that burned within him against circumstances. He seemed tied hand and foot, chained to the rock of the sordid and commonplace. Everybody talked of the rewards that came to "efficiency." (The word "efficiency" was in the air.) He was tired of being told that "red, red blood and efficiency" would give any man a good place in the world. He was efficient, he knew, in his line; and his blood was "red" enough. But he had no capital, he had no influential friends; a week's illness would throw him back so far that some of the hungry competitors for his place might seize it. And the very prize of life, the only things worth living for—love and a home—were being thrust farther and farther from him by some unseen ruthless hand. But all of a sudden he caught the drift of Mrs. Coyne's speech, and felt that, to please her, he must smile.

"And he worked so hard!" continued Mrs. Coyne. "When he was a clergyman he worked too hard. I think that's the reason people didn't appreciate him. I remember when he was called to preach one Sabbath at Asbury Park. It was in the season, you know, and the pastor was taken ill. Your poor father worked like a slave at his sermon. After all the trouble he took, people said it would have been better if he had taken somebody's else's sermon—Spurgeon's or Tal-

mage's—and saved himself all the trouble. It was just what most of the others did."

Trevanion smiled in earnest.

"We've always got on somehow, though he never saved anything until he gave up the ministry. Land! how we enjoyed things! 'It was an awful scraping of the sugar barrel,' he used to say, 'to get that mission furniture and the parlor organ.' But there they are! and I'm sure he died happier because he knew we had the pleasure of them. And a nice house *is* a pleasure. It's the greatest pleasure in life. But in these days you can't keep a nice house and save much," Mrs. Coyne added, with a sigh.

It was a relief, even to Mary, to have her mother's speech run on in this fashion during the supper. It showed that the routine of life had begun again.

"You and Mary had better take a walk, while mother and I wash up the dishes," said Amy good-naturedly.

"I wish I could!" Trevanion looked at his watch. "But I must go. They're taking account of stock to-night, and I have been away all day."

"Besides, it wouldn't be proper," said Mrs. Coyne. "None of the family could be seen in the street so soon after——"

"Of course not," Mary said.

"To-morrow George will come over and talk about our plans." Mrs. Coyne gazed with complete confidence at Trevanion. "We shall have four hundred dollars in bank when the life insurance is paid, and Mr. Talcott paid *his* wages two weeks in advance. Oh, we'll get on! And,

George, you and Mary had better be married quietly as soon as possible. Of course Amy can't be bridesmaid. A white frock——"

"Mother!" said Mary. "Mother!"

The tone, repressed as it was, made her mother start. She arose, forgetting to brush the crumbs from her lap, and put her arms around her daughter.

"Are you sick, Mary?"

"Yes, she's sick," said Trevanion, shortly. "Sick as I am of this rotten world."

Mary arose, frightened and timid, the color coming and going in her cheeks. Thunder, unexpected thunder, seemed to be threatening. She began to lift the teacups from the table, listening, with an expression as if she heard the sudden breaking of a storm. Trevanion's tone brought a startled look into her mother's eyes.

"Mary," Trevanion's face seemed illuminated by a fierce light—"Mary, why shouldn't I make a fight for it all, and take the risk? We're not like other folks—you and I. We are made of the stuff that never changes. Life," he said, looking at Mrs. Coyne very frankly and simply, "is not the same to us as it is to some others. We do not want riches and luxuries—and we couldn't have them if we wanted them," he added with a short laugh. "Life isn't anything to us, if we've got to live apart. And why shouldn't we make a fight for it?"

Mrs. Coyne, amazed, rose and lowered the uncovered gas jet, which was flaring a little. She was trembling.

"A fight?" echoed Mary bitterly. "How can

you fight? How can I fight? You can't begin life with the weight of such a handicap as we should have. I can only try to keep a roof over our heads, that's all, George—a roof over the heads of these helpless people. There's one comfort. By the time I've finished doing my duty to them, we'll be too old and perhaps too tired of life to care. At least *I* shall. Don't let's talk of it. There's no way out."

Mrs. Coyne trembled more and more; she nervously put back a strand of the yellow-grayish hair that had strayed on her forehead. She listened as one amazed. Suddenly she understood.

CHAPTER III

"GEORGE, Mary," said Mrs. Coyne, "you don't mean to say that you can't get married because the children and I will be a drag on you —that, with the flat taken, and all, you'll be obliged to back out on account of us? You don't *mean* that?"

There was silence.

"Answer me, George."

Trevanion did not answer.

"I must go," he said. "They'll be expecting me at the store. Dear Mrs. Coyne," he continued, with a deep regret in his kind eyes, "do not ask that question now. Don't you see it hurts Mary?"

"It hurts me more to have it unanswered, George."

Mrs. Coyne seized his coat sleeve and clung to it.

"O George, you can't mean that I stand in the way?"

"Mother," Mary broke in, "we'll try to be as content as can be here together, without father. I'll have to do more sewing and embroidering, that's all. By and by Amy can help, and later the boys. Don't worry. It's too soon to make plans."

"I *must* know!" Mrs. Coyne's voice had an unusual note in it. Mary had never heard her speak so resolutely. "I must know before Amy comes back."

Trevanion stood irresolute, looking at Mary, who said nothing. Knowing her capacity for silence, Trevanion spoke.

"Mary wants to stay at home a little longer."

"Mother, George has his mother and father and sister to keep—you know that."

"But he knew that when he asked you to marry him, didn't he?"

"Yes," Mary answered hopelessly.

"Well, what's happened since?" Mrs. Coyne's voice was shrill and apprehensive.

"This great change."

"But the children and I can get on *somehow,* can't we? I can even do my own washing, and we can live on very little."

"But where is that little to come from?"

Mrs. Coyne dropped into the rocking-chair and covered her face with her hands; tears trickled through her fingers.

"I'm sure," she wailed, "father and I couldn't have been more careful unless we had brought you children up in the meanest way. George Trevanion, you can't stand there and say that, after all our work, I'm no better than a pauper, and that I shall starve unless my child sacrifices her life for me?" Mrs. Coyne raised her voice until she fairly shrieked. "Oh, do not tell me that!"

The kitchen door opened.

"What's all the row about?" demanded Amy, flushed with her work. "Mother, mother, you mustn't cry so! Now, dear, come right up to your room and read your Bible. It's nice and warm there. Come!"

Amy took her mother by the arm and led her out.

"I can't believe it! I will not believe it!" she sobbed. "There must be some way out. I'll seek guidance in the Bible. George, don't go until I read my chapter."

Trevanion and Mary were alone.

"Poor mother!" said Mary. "I must try to find some consolation."

"In the Bible?"

"Yes, or somewhere. I never seemed to need religion before; but when I look at the long, stony path ahead, and know that father's no longer here, and that——"

"I have tried the Bible," he said, making a straight line with his lips, "and it has fooled me. It's full of contradictions; and even the consolation in it I can't apply to myself without feeling that it is only in my mind and not in an authoritative book."

"It was enough for your father and mother."

"It is not enough for me."

"It is our only guide in times of trouble like this."

"I will fight, Mary! You may take your time. I do not insist on a marriage to-day or to-morrow, but I shall not let myself be like the dumb, driven cattle. No! By heaven, I will know the reason why I'm ground down in this way, just because a good man did his duty in the world, and, when his hands were worn out and tired with the work, went out of it! No, Mary, I will fight! And somebody will pay for it."

"It's fine to hear you talk." Mary's eyes were

blazing like new stars in her white face. "It's fine. But you're not free to fight. No soldier could fight encumbered as you would be—here's Amy."

"No loud talking!" cautioned Amy, her finger on her lips. "Mother is saying her prayers."

"I must say mine. Good-night, George! There's nothing left but prayer."

She did not go to the door with him. He went out slowly.

"What's the matter, Mary?" Amy asked wistfully.

"It's an old trouble, Amy; but, like death, always new to those who suffer. Do not ask me now. Later I'll tell you. I think I'll run over to church. There's a sermon and a hymn to-night. I must get out of this house, and maybe I'll hear something to lift the trouble."

Amy silently helped her sister to put on her hat and cloak, and gave her a little Testament. Mary turned and kissed her.

"Amy," she said, "perhaps I seem selfish and cross to-night; but, oh, I'd give anything to save you from a sorrow like mine."

She opened the door, and Amy breathed with relief the pungent, aromatic scent of the autumn evening. She was not looking for trouble; her one idea was to finish the household tasks and get into bed.

The nearest church was St. Giles'—Episcopalian and very Low. It was lit up—the Rev. Dr. Wortley was delivering a series of Harvest sermons; it was more than half filled, and the organist was beginning a Bach fugue as Mary

entered. The music and the waiting people brought calmness to her. She had had music lessons; she had done her best with the little parlor organ at home, and she knew something of Bach. The church was square, well-proportioned, and glittering with polished brass against dark oak. The pews were wide and well cushioned, and a sense of well-being comforted her. She opened her Testament at random. "I'll find something that I need here," she said to herself, and read: "I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk willingly of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

"St. Paul's words, and St. Paul knew," she thought. She must endure and hope. She turned the leaves again at random, and found in St. Luke: "Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or wife or brethren or parents or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come eternal life."

Here was what she wanted. Christ Himself had spoken—His very words—His very words! She had given up what was more than life itself, to do her duty, and He had said that He would

not forsake her. "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." *Her* grace would come to her—a grace temporal and spiritual—through the merit of His resurrection. She wished now that she could tell George this—that she could communicate to him her gladness and her hope.

The clergyman, in surplice, entered the pulpit and gave out a hymn: "Jesus, Lover of my Soul." Mary joined in with all her heart. There was silence, then a brief prayer, and Dr. Wortley began his sermon. He was a man of imposing height, with very refined features, faintly tinted; he had a voice capable of exquisite modulations, and great grace of gesture, which he seldom used in reading his sermons.

His opening words were spoken softly, but the acoustic properties of the church were so good that they reached every part in it. Mary looked around as he spoke. The "best" people of the town were there. Dr. Wortley was much admired. Mary had never heard him preach, but she had heard of him very frequently; and she had gone to hear him to-night, in her eager wish for light and consolation, because everybody said that he was very learned. It was certain that the most cultivated people went to hear him. A thrill ran through her when he read—most impressively—the text from St. Paul to the Ephesians: "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Mary became as one wrapt. Here was the message; here was the guidance. She had come to the right

place. This benevolent and gentle-looking man seemed illumined with special wisdom.

After he had pronounced the words of St. Paul, he bowed his head, as if moved by an irresistible impulse, and repeated the "Our Father" tenderly. Then he said:

"The belief in an infallible Church was obviously impossible, under present conditions; while modern studies had shown that the belief in an infallible Bible was equally untenable. Unless they were to suppose a miracle, it was evident that they could not claim in those circumstances any certainty as to the real words of Jesus. Even in the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount they could not be absolutely certain of the exact words used."

Tears came into Mary's eyes. Surely this clergyman could not be right!

"The evidence of the Gospels themselves and the history of their origin made it hopeless to attempt to rely on the letter of the words spoken by Jesus, and they were driven back on the old contrast between the spirit and the letter. That was the principle they had always recognized in theory, though they had been somewhat timid with regard to its application in detail. They had been ready to speak of the spirit when it suited them, and yet reserved the right to insist on the letter when it happened to be their opponents who desired to appeal to the spirit. The principle should be applied fearlessly and consistenly. They had good reason to say that Jesus never intended His claim to authority to be interpreted as that of a verbally infallible Jesus.

Men yearned for concrete dogmatic authority. 'Tell me clearly what to do in all the complications of life, and I will try to do it; tell me definitely what I am to believe about its mysteries, and I will believe it.' That was for many the line of least resistance. It was easier to live under any authority, even the hardest, than in the freedom of the good; but that was not the method of Christ, who always made men think for themselves, and tried to draw out the best that was in them. To some extent each individual, to a greater extent each age and Church, must bravely shoulder the responsibility of interpreting for itself the mind of Christ and applying the principle of His teaching to its own needs and circumstances."

Mary heard every word clearly. A chill seemed to numb her heart as the exquisite modulations rose and fell with the words, "Belief in an infallible Bible untenable"! Yet she had been taught all her life that the Bible was the one changeless and infallible thing in the world. Even the "Lord's Prayer" was not exactly in the words of the pitying Christ.

She rose to leave the church. Much that the clergyman said was incomprehensible to her; but she understood enough. And he was the most learned of all the clergymen. She made her way out as soon as Dr. Wortley had paused. There was no certainty for her now. With the Bible gone, what was left? The earth had crumbled beneath her. She could never pray again. She stood for a moment at the top of the high flight of steps which led to the church, and looked down

the straight, moonlit street. That street led directly to the park. There was a way, well lighted; but for her there was now no way, no light, no guidance.

"It's a rotten world!" she said. "George is right; there is only one way, and that is to fight."

CHAPTER IV

THERE were various factories in Orvisville; likewise, there was a large colony of "commuters," a library housed in a white marble building, four churches, and a number of beautiful residences on the low hills about the town. It was a pretty town, if one did not look into the network of little streets, or examine too closely the Russian, Jewish or Negro settlements of recent origin.

The new interest in architecture and gardening had helped to obliterate the wooden houses of the '70's, with their queer towers and unexpected machine-made ornaments; and the gardens of the richer people were no longer mere stretches of dried grass in August, with blazing red geraniums dropped here and there. The motor car flourished among the factory owners on "The Hills" and the more important employees.

There were great extremes of riches and poverty here in this small town; but there was, too, a large number of people, like Trevanion and the Coynes, who felt that, being neither rich nor poor, they were the backbone of Orvisville. In many cases, like that of the Coynes', there was a very narrow margin between comfort and poverty; but, then, there were always as resorts for the unemployed, the clothing factory, and the canning works, founded by a California company that had chains of establishments from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The company had been

offered inducements to settle at Orvisville. The canning included oysters, which were imported in great quantities from Cape May and the Chesapeake, and the industry had brought in a population of negroes, whose skill in the art of "shucking" is proverbial. The canning people had moved from Baltimore because Orvisville had given them a free site, and labor was cheaper.

A great factory for the turning out of cheap clothes was the oldest of the enterprises. The canning factory had brought with it other industries: an establishment for the making of tin cans, and another for the blowing of glass bottles. The coming of these new industries had been heralded by the local newspapers with acclamation.

Mr. Wadsworth Morton, the "Can King," one of the members of the Trust, had taken the largest house on The Hills; and his tapestries, his Marie de Medici drawing-room, his Oriental smoking-room, and the beauty of his wife's pearls, had filled columns of print. This was logical enough, as the Can King had a three-fourth interest in the Orvisville *Gazette*. He had acquired this in view of his establishment in Orvisville, and Orvisville read of his splendors with interest, if not always with pride.

In fact, a new spirit was abroad in Orvisville. Twenty years ago, the Orvisville people had looked up to The Hills and discussed the doings of the dwellers on them with pride and without envy; but now there was much envy and some openly expressed contempt for the new and rather ostentatious folk who had taken the place

of the solid citizens of an older day. The extremes of riches and poverty were greater now, and there seemed to be less chance that the town boy, whose only asset was education, would reach The Hills in time.

In older days, some of the most distinguished on The Hills had been simple mortals indeed, and everybody hoped. Poverty had been practically unknown. If a respectable woman were left without means of support, a small shop would always be arranged for her. New York was farther off then. The department store and the mail-order system were not so potent, and the gap between the barely well-to-do and the rich was not so great.

There were then no evil-smelling back streets, peopled by the refuse of Europe. The German grocer and the Irish livery-stable keeper were respected citizens. The Irish cooks and the maids from The Hills were looked on with great regard when they came down to make purchases or to go to church; the son of the Mayor had married one of these maidens, and there had not been much surprise; for the Mayor had been a skilled carpenter in his time—and his son was proud of it. But now! Now there were classes, clearly recognized, and the distinctions were founded on money. Orvisville had ceased to be conservatively democratic, and had become aristocratic; or, rather, plutocratic, with a large proletariat of various grades. The proletariat, however, refused to look up, except when paid to do so. There were dwellers on The Hills who firmly believed that, in time, their money would enable

them to follow a system not unlike that old fashion in England, slowly passing away, in which the country families would be admitted leaders in everything.

There was even an incipient squire or two, who appeared at the country club in a reddish coat, and assumed that land should not be preserved by the greedy farmer merely for the growing of crops. "A farmer's fields ought not to be barred in the hunting season," Major Walcott retired often said. "The county had some hunting rights that ought to be respected: the land after all was not merely personal property." Dr. Wrigley frightened Major Walcott by asserting that the teaching savored of Socialism, and it was heard no more.

In a community in which even the richest went to his place of business every day, it was hard to arrange a programme of sports that demanded idleness. The women of The Hills had much leisure. But, then, society can not be formed out of women, and Lady Alicia Chetwynd, who had been tried by The Hills in the premise of society life, as the Czar of Tennessee walked miles every day, declined to use the motor car communally, and said that "her nerves" forbid her to learn.

Still, I was the best ride in many horses in The Hills that class distinctions had been finally fixed; and, although to be "mounted" was the finality that soon became out of the highest circle, it was, nevertheless, much. "Once an Equestrian" "It never counted a social asset to simply surrender the reins and never get.

This, and the dispensing of whiskey and soda and cigars, with an occasional cigarette to the ladies who smoked, completed his social duties.

The Hills forgot that feudal institutions and their effects, disappearing slowly or quickly in all parts of the world, could not be revived among time's "noblest offspring." And yet the people on The Hills assumed that they were a privileged class. The Can King, motoring one day, lost his fur cap. Mr. Coyne picked it up, and presented it to him, after the car had made a wide detour.

"Thanks, my good man!" the Can King had said, with an air of patronage that was not at all affected. "Oh, wait!" he added, and fished a quarter from his pocket.

"I may be 'a good man'—I hope I am," Coyne said flushing. "But I'm not *your good man.* Good-day, sir!"

The Can King looked back at him, and asked his name of the chauffeur, and he did not forget it.

"Independent!" he muttered. "That man ought to be taught his place."

The Can King (he had liked the title which the journalists had coined on the Pacific Coast, but he was not so sure that he liked it now) was not quite certain where the ex-clergyman's "place" was. The comparative poverty of the man, however, walking in cheap clothes by the roadside, made it apparent that his place was much inferior to any resident on The Hills. And the Can King muttered to himself: "I wonder if he knows who I am?" He became irritated at the thought that the American who refused a tip did know who he was.

When the Can King saw in the *Gazette* a brief notice of Coyne's death, he remembered the incident. There was at least one man gone from Orvisville who did not know his place. He was almost ashamed of the thought the moment he realized it; nevertheless, he assented to it. The possession of money, acquired rapidly, and the complete control of luxuries, without any corresponding idea of moral responsibility, had not been good for this great person. He was founding a family—a family that was already of the elect. "There are two classes in the world," his wife often heard him say: "Those who give hard knocks and those who take them. *My* children shall not be of the second class." Mrs. Wadsworth Morton always said feebly that she hoped "it would never be so bad as that"; and returned to a study of new combinations for auction bridge.

The Wadsworth Mortons represented perhaps the extreme view of the new plutocracy. The Isaac Weltermans were less extreme. They believed in the power of money to make life easy and luxurious, and they used it frankly for that purpose. They were materialists, to a certain degree; but they were neither haughty nor hard-hearted, and they had—as all Jews have—ideals of their own, for which they worked seriously. Isaac had come from a respectable Jewish family, which had been settled in New York for fifty years. The father and mother were of Hamburg, and these old people were never tired of celebrating the beauties of their Northern Venice. Two months spent every year in the front rooms of a

hotel overlooking the water in that city, was their one great pleasure. They had begun in a porcelain shop in Chelsea; and porcelain, imported, manufactured, was the supporter of the Welterman wealth, which was very great.

Isaac Welterman's family consisted of two sons and one daughter, and the grandparents, who were treated with the most distinguished and tender consideration. Isaac Welterman believed earnestly that "business was business," and acted on it without reserve. He slept in Orvisville, but really lived in New York.

By the time the canning industry was in full swing, Orvisville had changed much. The trim servant maids became factory girls. Even The Hill people had to pay fabulous prices for imported butlers and maids. The few Irish servants formed a kind of aristocracy of their own, and their numbers diminished every year. They were greatly in demand, and sometimes rather despotic. The first Greek had opened a fruit shop, and two Chinese had planted wonderful truck gardens.

Into the social atmosphere, thus broadly indicated, Mary Coyne entered, with the determination to fight her way to the comfort and material well-being enjoyed by so many of her neighbors, which she had hitherto neither desired nor envied; and in this atmosphere, Trevanion, suddenly awakened, by a terrible disappointment from a condition of reasonable contentment, determined to find a way to that equality of possession and enjoyment of the goods of the earth,

of which the lack made him, in the estimation of his world, an inferior.

Trevanion knew well that in spite of all the talk about efficiency now current, it takes a good deal of work to secure and hold securely twelve hundred dollars a year, if a man is just an average man, and knows it. Everybody told him "that he ought to get back to the farm;" he would have been delighted to do this if he had had a farm, and knew what to do with it. He understood only the keeping of books; and, as land in his part of New Jersey was very high in price, he could only stick to his desk. Besides, Mary had no liking for country life—and there you were!

The day when he was forced to countermand various orders he had given for the furnishing of the apartment in which he had hoped to begin his married life was one of the bitterest in his experience. He had saved hard to get Mary some of the pretty things she liked. There was a little pink-and-white tea-set he had ordered from Trenton, an upright piano; and there, too, were a pair of old Chelsea figures, and the towels and table-cloths embroidered by his mother. The furniture dealer took the tables and chairs back; but Trevanion kept the piano, as Mary would not accept it.

"No," she said; "I will keep nothing but your engagement ring, and that does not bind you; for I shall not wear it on my finger."

He ground his teeth; but Mary was obdurate, and he respected her for it.

"The piano might help to recompense you for your outlay for dresses, and——"

"Oh, you're only a man!" she said. "The ring is all I will keep."

He revenged himself, however, by sending the piano to Amy, who wept until her mother allowed her to keep it. It must be admitted that the family were tired of the parlor organ.

"It will be the last thing we shall sell, George," Mary said, in one of those moods in which a woman tortures the man she loves, "just before we all go to the almshouse."

How to keep out of the almshouse was a serious question. Mary had the question before her day and night. Her mother would not understand the situation.

"I was young and now I am old," she continually said; "but never have I seen the just deserted or their seed begging their bread. David knew what he was talking about; and I shall never mistrust the Bible."

"I haven't your faith, mother!"

"You'd be happier if you had," Mrs. Coyne answered.

"Yes," Mary said, thinking that she would have still had her illusions if she had not heard a Christian preacher say that there was "no infallible Bible."

Even Amy was called into the family council. She was in her last year at the high school, and Mary felt that the best way to prepare her for the struggle to come was to lay some responsibility upon her. When everything was paid, not overlooking the mortgage of seven hundred dol-

lars on the house, paid out of the life insurance money, the Coynes found themselves possessed of just a little less than four hundred dollars.

"We're not so badly off, after all," said Mrs. Coyne complacently. "There are a lot of folks poorer than we are."

Mary could not echo that note of content. She knew how far her five dollars a week—which was all that she could count on—would stretch, with five people to feed and clothe.

"So they'll have a pound a week from Molly's earnings," commented Mrs. Trevanion, on the day after the funeral. "It wouldn't be bad at home, if one had a clear cottage. I mind me, lad, at Cardiff, a pound was worth two of what it is in America. So, George, she broke the marriage off and wouldn't have you!"

Trevanion sat in the kitchen of his mother's little house. He had been working about in his shirt sleeves, putting white paper on the shelves of her spotless cupboard, where brass and tin glittered and pewter gleamed. His father had been tucked comfortably into bed. Mrs. Trevanion was bent, but agile. She pounced upon a fly that made a black spot upon the white enamel paint of the closet door. Her hawk-like eyes glittered, and she hummed "*Ayr hyd y nos*" in a very true voice.

Trevanion waited. When his mother began to hum (she had been famous at Eisteddfods in her youth) he knew that she was about to say something important.

"Mother, do not blame her—don't! I can't

stand it from *you*. She is as good and true—as you are."

Mrs. Trevanion's eyes softened.

"Blame her!" she exclaimed, in a clear, but low voice. "Wasn't she willing to burden herself with an old scold like me and a sick man like your dad before this loss came upon her? It's to help you, George, she has done it. And it's breaking the poor thing's heart! I'm a near woman, folks say. I've had to be, or I'd never made a man of you, George. But she'll have all my savings—there's twenty pounds of them—and they're gone off to-day!"

George sat down on the carefully scrubbed pine chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"Oh mother!" he said; "and she thinks you don't like her! You've never said a kind word to her."

"Words!" replied the old woman, contemptuously. "Kind words don't butter parsnips."

And so Mary found a hundred dollars in her hands, with the words written on a slip of paper in a trembling script: "It's yours. Don't thank me!" And when she met Mrs. Trevanion she shook her hand.

"You'd be the better if you'd only keep your bonnet more straight, Molly; it's always crooked," Mrs. Trevanion said sarcastically. "I'd rather see a young woman anything but a sloven."

Mary straightened her bonnet, and felt as if she had received a benediction. Hitherto, she had sewed at home for such thrifty housekeepers who chose to employ her. During the last year,

her income ("just pocket-money," as Mrs. Coyne often said, having really a contempt for dress-making as an avocation) had been about four dollars a week. It varied, as the thrifty housekeepers rushed upon her like wolves in the spring and autumn and deserted her in the summer and winter. One thought possessed her now; she must not touch the money in bank, and she must grip Mrs. Trevanion's gift with a tight hand until she could pay it back; she must increase her income.

The most terrific result of the change in her life was to Mrs. Coyne the refusal of her daughter to go into mourning in the conventional sense. The black gowns and the necessary habiliments of woe had been borrowed for the occasion. Mary was willing to buy a black dress and veil for her mother; and Amy, who was expert in some ways, manufactured a black bonnet; but Mrs. Coyne wailed for three days over the heartlessness of her daughter. Death, in her eyes, had a double sting if there were to be no dark symbols of its visitation.

"I never, never heard of such a thing! What will people think?"

"We can't afford to think of what people will think," returned Mary grimly. "There's no money for black clothes—that's all."

Probably this assertion had more to do with enlightening Mrs. Coyne as to the real state of affairs than any other evidence of poverty could have done.

"But Amy is to go through the high school

and keep up her music lessons!" Mrs. Coyne exclaimed in alarm.

"Amy will go through the high school, if I can afford to keep her in frocks and shoes and ribbons and collars."

"Oh, I can crochet collars!" said Mrs. Coyne cheerfully; "and we can always iron out a ribbon or two. Mary, your daddy had set his heart on the children's education; and Amy has such a good touch for the piano, her teacher says."

"I'll try to teach her what I know." Mary's brow puckered. "I'll do my best, mother."

"I might take in washing" suggested Mrs. Coyne timidly; "if I could hang the things out at night, so the neighbors should not see. That might help to pay for Amy's lessons."

"We'll see, mother—we'll see," Mary said, trying not to be impatient. She was wondering how she could add to their income. She had heard somewhere that Mrs. Wadsworth Morton wanted a sewing maid, and that wages were high on The Hills. The English butlers were supposed to receive fabulous amounts. Mary thought of applying to Mrs. Morton. She did not mention this at home; but, after a week's anxiety, caused by trying to collect small bills, she went over to consult Trevanion's mother.

"I mind me," Mrs. Trevanion said, "when a body in Wales could bring up a family of four and keep a roof over their heads for twelve shillings a week; it can't be done—my word, it can't! Folks are wanting more than they did, and there are fewer deaths among the young and better constitutions because they're better fed. They're

more wide awake like—that they are; but still the poor are only one-eyed. God help the world when they get their eyes fully opened and fight for their rights! There will be no stopping them. —A sip of tea and a bite of toast? That's right. you're tired like. Yes, I'd try Mrs. Morton; but she's not a lady, all the same. She just lives to spend the money her husband makes, and she'll never be a real aristocrat, no matter what she puts on her back or how elegant she speaks. Try Mrs. Morton, and keep your temper, remembering it is her money you want, and not her civility. But don't take work that will keep you away from home nights. Amy's growing up fast, and she'll need you. Your mother's a good creature, but she don't know the world."

Mary laid down the beflowered teacup—the one Mrs. Trevanion always gave to "company."

"Don't be frightened," continued Mrs. Trevanion, turning the toast before the stove grate on her long fork; "it's only by way of looking ahead, I say that. Don't do any work that will take you too much away from home. Amy's a nice girl; but I see the boys—and some young men, too—trying to carry her books for her. When a girl has no father——"

Mary turned away.

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Trevanion, "I have burned the toast! Come here, Mary, and take the fork. You'll do better than me."

Mary obeyed, hot tears on her cheeks; but the fire dried them. Mrs. Trevanion had planted her seed, and closed the discussion.

"Now we'll be cosy!"

CHAPTER V

THERE was an air of peace about Mrs. Trevanion's kitchen, with its purring cat on the rug, its red geraniums in the window, thrown out against the white cambric curtains, that many rooms do not have. In fact, the only restless and thoroughly alive things in the room were the old woman's eyes. Mary supplied the hostess with toast, and took up her own teacup. One could never feel the worry of the world in that abode of cosiness.

Suddenly Trevanion's steps were heard.

"He's just in time for tea!" exclaimed his mother. "More toast, Mary?"

It was Saturday, a half holiday—Mary had forgotten it. She arose hastily. "More toast!" repeated Mrs. Trevanion, and Mary knelt down, toasting fork in hand.

"I'm going out to-night, mother," Trevanion's voice said, from the little anteroom they called an "entry." "I have joined the Bebel Club. It will be my first meeting; but I won't be late. Let's have supper early."

"Why," said Mary, raising her head; and, in her surprise, forgetting that she ought to be embarrassed, "that's a Socialist crowd!"

"Mary!" he said delightedly. "Let me make the toast. Of course it is!"

"But—" Mary began.

"'Tis as I told you," Mrs. Trevanion cut in. "The half-blind are getting their sight. But

George won't get into trouble, because he's got his religion."

George's face was hidden; he knelt in Mary's place before the fire, making the toast.

"They're dangerous people," said Mary. "Oh, do keep away from them!"

He noticed that she did not dare to use his Christian name.

"Dr. Wortley," Mary spoke urgently, "said the other night that a good Protestant couldn't be a Socialist."

"Nonsense!" replied Trevanion. "A good Protestant can be anything. I've heard Dr. Wortley say that even the Bible isn't infallible."

A chill seemed to come into the air. At least Mary felt it. Trevanion arose, holding on his fork a very accurately browned piece of toast.

"Bernard Shaw says that nowadays the supernatural element in Protestantism has perished; and I'm sure I can remember the exact words: 'If every man's private judgment is still to be justified as the most trustworthy interpreter of the will of humanity (which is not a more extreme proposition than the old one about the will of God), Protestantism must take a fresh step in advance and become Anarchism. Which it has accordingly done, Anarchism being one of the notable new creeds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.' There!" George prided himself on his memory.

"Dear, dear!" sighed Mrs. Trevanion. "It does sound like Antinomianism; my father was a Cornishman, though I'm a Welshwoman, and his father was Antinomian. Sit, George—sit, and

eat your toast. I'll wager you'll soon get rid of the Socialists. They've a lot of Dagos and other foreigners among them, who come over here because they aren't allowed to kill kings in their own countries. But I always say that we're all right as long as we cling to the Bible. Not that I hold to the ideas that one shouldn't visit the holy wells, as our people did in the days of the monks. If I could get your father back to St. Winifred's Water I'm sure he'd getter better. It stands to reason that a Welsh saint wouldn't go back on one of his own people. And holy wells are mentioned in the Bible."

"But," Mary began anxiously, "I hope that you will not join the Socialists." Mary spoke to Trevanion directly.

"Their doctrines are dangerous. You read the wrong kind of books, George." He smiled as she pronounced his Christian name. "This Bernard Shaw is a mocker; nothing is sacred to him."

"Imagine Bernard Shaw influencing anybody!" A twinkle came into George Trevanion's eyes. "I do read a lot, Mary, but I think more."

Mrs. Trevanion was cutting bread too intently to hear their low tones. She did everything intensely.

"I think more," he repeated. "Mary," he spoke with a sternness that amazed her, "I have discovered that I am a man. I *must* have my part in this world and my share of the goods of this world. Look at us! You are compelled to wear your youth away, heartbroken—don't flush! I know it—because your father never had a chance to do *more* than the duties of everyday

life. Your mother is a good woman. She has economized, she strove; she had only one thought —God, her husband, her children—all one. And now she's thrown on the world, and despised because she's poor. No, no! I'll go on. You quoted Dr. Wortley—a gentleman, I'll admit; but who sit in his front pews? The people of The Hills. Whom does he visit—as equals, I mean? The Wadsworth Mortons and the other rich rabble. What can he do, or any other Christian clergyman do, for your mother and her children? Talk platitudes about resignation, and hope that she won't give her children ideas above their class. And old Wortley talking about the laxity of the marriage tie! Why, there are thousands of men like myself who want to marry and can't—men with crushingly small wages, but *men* for all that. I'm well off compared to some of them; you know *that*. I'm going to fight the whole wretched system for *them* and for us." His eyes blazed. "I'm going to *fight*, I say, with every weapon at my command. Fire with fire!"

"It's wrong," said Mary.

"Prove it! We have some rights. Why, the Jews are better than the Christians!" he sneered. "Old Welterman on The Hills looks after every poor Jewish widow in Orrisville. He sets them up in little shops or something. Look at the Can King—front pew at Dr. Wortley's!"

"I'm going to the Can King to ask for sewing."

"You're not!" He raised his voice.

"George," said his mother, "sing your hymn, so that your poor dad in the room above can hear you; it'll cheer him up a bit. Supper's ready.

Sit down, Mary, and have a bite of the sausage. Your hymn, George! I don't hold to prayer before meat without music. I'm a Welshwoman."

Through habit, Trevanion bowed his head and began, in a rich, resonant baritone, "Rock of Ages."

Mary slipped away. As she went she heard Mrs. Trevanion's true, shrill treble joining in. The singing of that hymn had always, before this, thrilled her: now it left her cold. If the Bible were gone—if it were not *sure,* as Dr. Wortley had said—if the Lord's Prayer was not really the Lord's, what was the use of the hymn—a hymn to an unknown God?

All thoughts of religion were driven out of her mind by the spectacle that met her view when she entered the little parlor at home. Amy stood with her back against the kitchen door, her hat on, pouting. Mrs. Coyne sat in the rocking-chair, moving to and fro, and gesticulating helplessly. Herbert, with his hair dishevelled and his necktie awry, was protesting against something at the top of his voice.

"I didn't mean any harm. I only said that I saw you walking home with high school boys, and I know you're going out to meet one who wears a high hat. You had no business to pull my hair and—Oh, Mary!"

"What's the matter?" asked Mary, surprised. Her father had been an unseen force in the house. She did not remember that anything like this scene had occurred before.

"Mother objects to my going out!" cried Amy. "She says that I oughtn't to go out for a breath

of fresh air, just because poor dad's dead. I'm not in black—it won't shock anybody."

"That's just it, Mary," Mrs. Coyne put in querulously. "If you had let her go into black she'd have more respect for the memory of her poor dead parent."

"But what *is* the matter?" Mary went up and patted Amy gently on the back. "Come, help me to get supper ready."

"I won't!" said Amy, pouting. "I have had to get supper every night this week. What with getting supper and my lessons I haven't a moment to myself. I have an engagement. I'm going to have cakes and ice cream with a friend."

"A tall boy, with a high hat and cloth-covered shoes. *I* saw him," said Herbert, maliciously, adjusting his necktie.

"Amy! Oh, Amy! You won't dare to disobey your mother! You're a bad girl to want to go tramping about the streets at this hour, and so soon after——"

Amy frowned, and shrugged her shoulders impatiently.

"Don't go out, Amy, dear!" said Mary gently. "Not this evening. I want to have a little talk with you. Besides," she added, "Mrs. Trevanion gave me a new piece of music she cut out of a magazine—the serenade in 'The Millions of Harlequin.' We can try it over after supper."

"You mustn't open the piano!" exclaimed Mrs. Coyne, galvanized into life. "What would the neighbors say—so soon—so soon! Oh, children, you have no hearts!"

"There!" murmured Amy. "There's nothing to do home, you see, except to listen to talebear-

ers and moans and groans. Dad always liked music, and he was never glum. Oh, I wish he was back again, or that I had somebody who understood me! *He* did."

"Amy," Mary said, very much bewildered, "we'll have a cosy supper, and then we'll hum the new piece over. It's lovely, Mrs. Trevanion said. Don't go out to-night."

A whistle was heard outside. Amy blushed.

"If you expect to be treated as a lady you mustn't permit that," said Mary gravely. "Come, come, show the young gentleman that you know what good manners are."

Gentle and unconcerned as she appeared to be, Mary was bewildered and alarmed. There had been passages at arms over various points, such as are usual in most households. The boys had been boisterous and quarrelsome at times, Amy had sometimes sulked; but here was open rebellion, and something behind it that her intuition warned her was dangerous. Amy, apparently indignant that she should be whistled for, helped Mary with the preparations for supper, while Mrs. Coyne rocked and moaned. When the meal was over and the boys safe in bed Mary tried to amuse Amy by picking out the tune of the serenade. At times she listened as if for the whistle again.

"Mother," observed Mary, as she said good-night, "we must open the piano if we want to keep Amy at home. She's too old to be locked in, and not old enough to be trusted out."

"Just because we're poor," sobbed Mrs. Coyne, "we're to have none of the consolations of mourning! You are heartless!"

CHAPTER VI

THERE was a rumor that Mrs. Wadsworth Morton paid her sewing maid twenty-five dollars a month, and kept a lady's maid besides. Mary resolved to test the truth of it, and offer herself for the place. The money would come in regularly. She thought for a week about it. It seemed the only way. She was fond of home, and the prospect of ascending and descending another's stairs did not appeal to her. To miss the return of the boys from school; to have hour after hour an exacting mistress over her, would be very trying. It was terrible in anticipation.

She was very slim and upright, as she went up the white marble steps that led to the Can King's house. It was really a palace, modelled after a famous one in Florence. She had avoided the quick way around, used by everybody in Orvisville as a common road, until Mr. Morton had planted a hedge of poison ivy in order to be sure of entire seclusion from the ordinary folk. For this, old Mrs. Trevanion never spoke of him without a Gaelic curse. She was sometimes reminded by those who were, or expected to be, in his employ, that the poison ivy grew there of its own accord. She added a second curse—she never swore in English—and declared that he might have had the weed pulled up. There was no answer to this.

It was sufficient that he had closed the old coach road, and the anxiety of Orvisville mothers

was much increased by the dangerous hedge. Through this, mainly, the name of the resplendent "Can King" of California became a phrase of dislike and ridicule around Orvisville. And there were other things.

The great drawing-room of Mrs. Wadsworth Morton's house was somewhat in shadow; the curtains were heavy, and the sky without was somber. Jack Morton, home from his University for a time—"resting," he said—was lounging on a divan, covered with Persian cloth, in a corner of the room. The smoke of his cigarette was plainly perceptible. He was tall, loosely built, well-groomed, with keen, steel-blue eyes, like his father, and an expression of facile good nature. His Norfolk jacket, breeches, and heavy shoes showed that he had been out. A moment before Mary entered, Mr. Morton himself had come in, carefully attired. He was shorter than his son and heavier, with tighter lips, rather flabby cheeks, and two small rolls of fat on the back of his neck; he was over fifty, but apparently very active and alert.

"Golf makes a man thirsty," said the son.

"You've had one whiskey and soda, and that's enough," said the father. "If you keep up the pace you've been going at college, you'll end by being a regular tank."

A tall and languid-looking woman, in a tea gown of white and pink, came through the severely white-enamelled doorway.

"Cigarette smoke!" she said, petulantly. "And I allow nobody to smoke in this room but my-

self! O Jack" (to her son), "Travers said that a young person wanted to see me."

Travers, the English footman, suddenly appeared from the hall.

"Where's the young person?"

"She's coming in a moment, Madam. I left her in the foyer downstairs, Madam."

"Bring tea. Of course you men" (to her husband) "are famished."

Travers touched a button, and half a dozen electric-lighted flowers appeared on the various tables scattered through the room. The result was rather bizarre, but pretty.

"Oh, do not have that done, mother!" groaned Jack. "It spoils all comfort. Reminds me of a display of fireworks at Coney Island."

It seemed to Mary as if she was obliged to walk on a lake of ice to reach Mrs. Morton, who had taken her place in a *chaise longue* on the island of a Louis Seize rug. With the exception of the Persian silk over the divan, where Morton and his son lounged, everything in the room was severely Louis Seize; and the floor was slippery in a truly Louis Seize manner. Mary's approach was very slow and careful. The glow of the lights fell on her face and figure as she suddenly paused, for from a room to the left came the sounds of a violin. Mary paused for an instant.

"I must have that stopped. I can't hear my own ears," said Mrs. Morton irritably.

"Oh, do not, please!" said Mary involuntarily. "It's from one of Mozart's——"

"Indeed?" Mrs. Morton tried to freeze Mary at once.

Jack giggled.

"A very pretty girl," said his father.

"Not a patch on her sister. I know her. She's a beauty at the high school. Great friend of mine."

Mary heard this sibilant whisper above the tones of the music.

"I presume that a knowledge of dressmaking is not assisted by interest in music," said Mrs. Morton coldly. It was evident that this person did not know her place. "I want a sewing maid."

"I know," said Mary; "that is the reason I came. I do not think that a slight knowledge of music has anything to do with dressmaking. I suppose that I ought to apologize for recognizing that a part of the concerto in D major was being very well played. I have heard it on the phonograph and once at a concert."

Mary met Mrs. Morton's gaze.

"I hear that you pay twenty-five dollars a month to your sewing maid."

"I do, if she's a good one. What's your name?"

"Mary Coyne. I have references."

"I shall call you Coyne, if I engage you."

She stretched herself in her *chaise longue,* to emphasize the fact that this impudent young woman was not to be asked to sit down.

"I don't care what you call me," said Mary, smiling in her most charming way, "if you pay me twenty-five dollars a month and my work suits you."

The music ceased. A narrow white and gold door opened, and a young girl in hat and furs appeared. She carried her gloves in her hand.

She seemed very slim and boyish-looking, in spite of the fur about her shoulders.

"Mother, I want tea," she said. "I'm going out. Oh, present me to the young lady."

"This is Coyne," her mother answered shortly. "She is to be my new sewing maid, if she suits me."

"I need the place," said Mary.

"You must need a place very badly," replied Molly Morton flippantly. "I warn you that mother's a fiend about her dresses. Why, you're the girl that sat next to me at the Spalding concert, and agreed with me that it was good of such an exquisite artist to come to such a small place! Good-by! Did you hear me play that Allegro?"

"I liked it."

"Good for you, Miss Coyne! Mother, I can't wait for your doddering old tea. I have a date with Alice Johnston."

"Molly!"

But Molly had gone.

Mary stood calmly before Mrs. Morton and waited.

"Twenty-five dollars—twenty-five dollars a month!" she repeated to herself.

"Do you understand mending laces?"

Thanks to old Mrs. Trevanion, her preceptress, she did, and she said so. The men in the far-off corner continued to smoke and watch.

"I am thinking of doing without a maid, and you'd have to be up late. I require my things to be looked over the moment after I come from a party. The new dances tear one's gowns so!"

"Should I be required to live in the house?"

"Of course."

"I had the impression that your sewing maid might go at night."

"Not at all."

Mary hesitated. Then she recalled the little riot at home and Amy's independence.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Morton," she said, with an effort. "I shall not suit: I must go home in the evenings."

"Why?"

"I have other duties, Mrs. Morton—to my mother."

"But your first duty is to earn your living."

"Yes, but I am not bound to earn my living in any way that will interfere with my duties at home, Mrs. Morton."

"I never heard anything so idiotic. Why, that's rank Socialism!"

"Is it? Thank you for seeing me! Good-by!"

Mrs. Morton leaned back, with an air of patient suffering on her face.

Jack Morton jumped up and opened the door for Mary, with ostentatious politeness. Mary gave him a cold glance, that meant war to the knife.

"Gee, mother," he said when she had gone, "she's a beaut! She may be cheeky, but there's nothing common about her."

"I dismiss the creature from my mind. Tea, Travers—tea!"

Mary walked slowly past the peacocks, whose splendors were catching some faint red rays of sunlight.

"I'm a Socialist," she said. "At least I think I am, but I'll find out."

CHAPTER VII

MARY COYNE owed the best part of her education to Mrs. Trevanion, though she always maintained a stern attitude toward her. The old Welshwoman had longed for a daughter, and her daughter had come into the world feeble-minded. The girl, as she grew older, became almost idiotic, and her mother was compelled to give her into the hands of strangers. Out of the pittance she earned, before George reached manhood, she paid something for the keeping of the girl in an asylum in New York. She hated all State institutions, and she could be brought to part with her daughter only when the Sisters agreed to take her.

"I'm not a Catholic," she said, "but I know I can trust you. It's no charity," she added fiercely; "for I'll pay what I can."

The Sisters were always very gentle with the old woman, who poured out torrents of Cymric at times, and now and then went into the chapel to hear the music, which she loved.

"Outside, when I speak English," she said, "I'm a lady; but with you I'm just a Welshwoman."

The Mother Superior knew some Gaelic.

Mary Coyne had, in a manner, supplied the place of the lost Jennifer; and from Mrs. Trevanion she learned many Old-World accomplishments which are not taught in American homes or schools. Rheumatism crippled Mrs. Tre-

vanion's hands, but this did not prevent her from teaching Mary the finest stitching. The girl learned from her the value of various herbs, the qualities of various edible fungi, much about music, and many little methods of making cheap food palatable.

At this moment, when all the supports of her life seemed to have fallen beneath her weight, Mary's great sources of courage were in the practical lessons taught her by the old Welshwoman. She had done her best to repay part of the gift by taking care of poor old Mr. Trevanion, who had lain for so many years waiting for death, whenever Mrs. Trevanion would let herself be relieved from this labor. Like most Celts, Mrs. Trevanion had the artistic sense. She knew a good picture when she saw it, and her scrap-book was full of copies of great pictures cut from cast-off papers and magazines. Mary had, under Mrs. Trevanion's direction, turned out a costume for a little girl, founded on an old English print, after Reynolds, in this collection.

"Don't you see," the old woman said, her eyes sparkling—"don't you see that, if you study any art thoroughly, you *can't* make ugly things? I will say, Mary, what you know, you know. And people like beauty in the long run. These old painters didn't make ugly things; and, if you ever become a great dressmaker, it's these lines and these colors and these anatomies of human beings you must study for models. But you'll have no time for dressmaking when you're looking after my son's house some day."

Mary had continued her work, however.

Amy's rather full-blown prettiness was enhanced by her skill in making clothes. The mothers of most of the girls at the high school were sure that Mrs. Coyne was hopelessly in debt—an impression made on them by the sight of Amy's simple but becoming dresses; and dress was very important at the high school. "I shouldn't mind being in rags on Sunday," Amy often said; "but the girls despise you so if you don't have changes." This state of affairs made it rather hard for some of the poor mothers, whose daughters were forced, at the risk of criticism, to keep up appearances. But Mrs. Coyne never felt it, and Amy's appearance was the advertisement that brought Mary all the custom she had.

"The fool!" exclaimed Mrs. Trevanion, when Mary had told her of the interview with Mrs. Wadsworth Morton. "The fool!" she repeated in Gaelic. "You'd have made her look like a lady. She's the one that's lost, not you. And you just take your revenge by putting your best touches on the first customer you get from The Hills, and blot the Can King's wife out. You don't know much about the hardness of the world, Mary; but you're right: you must not neglect Amy. Your mother's the best of women, but she'll always be like a child."

"I can see that. Father never seemed to be the guide for us all, and yet he was. Since his death, I have a feeling that everything has gone to pieces."

" 'Tis a common feeling. When my man met with his accident, 'twas the same way. I never

pretended to pay much attention to his opinions; but I did, all the same. And then when my girl began to show signs of feeble-mindedness, 'twas worse. But one day I met Father Cook, the Roman priest, in the street, and he says: 'You look weary, Mrs. Trevanion.' (We knew everybody to talk to in them days.) And I up and said: 'I *am* weary; for the world's upside down, and nothing's sure.'—'Sure?' he said. 'Nothing's sure, but all's safe as long as we make each day pay for itself, and get some good out of it.'—'Good?' I said. 'There's no good in this world for me; there's nobody so wretched as I am. Death can be met, but a trouble like that that's come on my poor Jennifer leaves no way out. I can't keep her at home, and I can't give her up to strangers.' (I don't know why I told him.) 'I see,' he said. 'We'll have the Sisters take her. I'm sure I can manage it. A rich friend of mine has given me a donation for just such cases as this.'—'I've always heard that the Sisters are to be trusted,' said I; 'but I won't have her made a Roman of.'—'She'll hear good singing when she goes to the chapel.' (He knew my weakness; for all my grief, I couldn't help laughing.) 'And,' he said, 'when your fine boy grows up and begins to earn, you can pay something, and I'll send you jobs of mending now and then.'

"And, do you know, his speaking of my boy growing up and being a man and earning a man's wages, put the heart into me! So I let Jennifer go. She worried her poor old father almost to death, and the sensible kindness of Father Cook made me feel that everything was not gone and

smashed. You know what he did for Bridget La Clare's Madeline, when poor Bridget was near wild about her. He sent her up to Montreal, and she's come back as steady and sensible as you could wish.

"Now, if I were you, Mary, I'd go and talk to old Father Cook. He knows the world like a book, and human nature, too. To think of his saying 'She'll hear good music in the chapel,' the old rogue! But I have never forgotten his goodness; for a friend in need is a friend indeed. There are times when even our friends seem useless, because they don't *see* things, and know what is needed."

"Father Cook is no doubt a good man," Mary said stiffly; "but I am sure that no clergyman could do me any good. I must work my own way. I can't afford to be 'slommerkin.' There are plenty of people in Orvisville who can sew, and who make a sort of living by it. I will not go to the factory to be sweated. I've just got to find some way of raising my head above the rest."

"George would call you an individualist, if he heard you say that," replied Mrs. Trevanion, with a gleam in her eyes. "Since he has taken to the Socialists, he is all for equality. 'Tis nonsense! No matter how clever you are, you've got to mark time until the stupid ones catch up or don't catch up. But how he does talk! It's a pleasure to listen to him. It's like hearing a fairy tale."

"Poor George!" Mary murmured with a sigh.

Mrs. Trevanion looked at her with her little, black, glittering eyes.

"Her mind is beginning to come off her own troubles. That's a good sign."

Mary went to the kitchen window—which was a big bay, put in by George himself for the sake of the sun—and began to pick the dried leaves from the geranium plants.

"You've always told me to do everything thoroughly," she said; "and I have tried, and I've succeeded—except in learning Cymric," she added, smiling. "Now, what I do, I must do thoroughly. But how to begin?"

"I've never been in any trouble," said the old woman, "from which my Bible and a cup of strong tea could not help me out."

A cloud settled on Mary's face.

"When dad was alive, I didn't mind whether people owed me money for weeks or months. I sometimes think that people liked my work because I didn't press them for money; and it is rather hard for a woman to pay up when she has to squeeze every new dress she gets for herself and the girls by dribs and drabs out of the grocery bills. But now I must have something regularly. There are five mouths to feed, with the taxes, the water rent. The little capital we have" (Mary blushed, for she was thinking of Mrs. Trevanion's gift) "we must keep. It stands, at a pinch, between us and destruction. I must find a way."

"Take a week," said Mrs. Trevanion, "and don't sell *all* your time to anybody. God has put Amy and the boys in your care for a time, and you owe them something."

"But, oh, Mrs. Trevanion," Mary burst out,

"God can't have intended, when He gave human beings free will, that things should be as they are! Talk of slavery! If I had to take the place with Mrs. Wadsworth Morton, I'd be a slave body and soul. If I should go to the suit factory, it means the same thing. Work, work, work, from morning until night—to crawl to bed sick of work; to breathe air full of scraps; to be poisoned perhaps as that poor girl was poisoned in the wool mill with some wretched infection in the Oriental wool; to drag through Sunday, waiting for Monday—all for food and clothing, and not much of that. Look at some of the poor creatures in the can factory! Just slaves! Do you remember the way some of the farmers treated the poor strawberry-pickers last year? They were so poor and so hopeless! Your Father Cook did stand up for them, I know. His letters in the *Gazette* were brave. But it didn't do any good. The poor creatures went back to the slums worse than they came."

"Mary," Mrs. Trevanion said, "I didn't intend to allude to that little gift of mine, but I must. I want you to spend some of it in resting and looking about you for a week or two. I saved it up for a very worldly reason." (She laughed until her eyes twinkled like black and brown stars.) "I determined that sometime or other I'd go up to the city and hear concerts, operas—the *best*—for a week. In Wales we had good music for nothing. You can't have it here; for this country isn't quite civilized yet; it's new. Now, you see," she added authoritatively, "we'll spend some of that music money in easing your

mind for two weeks. When you have earned a hundred dollars clear, you can give it back to me, and we'll have my spree together. When I speak English," she said, breaking into Welsh, "I'm a lady; but when I speak Cymric, I'm a witch and a wise woman. Go!"

The helpless man upstairs was knocking on the floor, so Mary went, obedient; for Mrs. Trevanion had an uncanny way of enforcing obedience by the use of strong language.

Reaching the head of the street, she heard the sound of music coming from Dr. Wortley's church.

"No," she said; "it's only a place of shadows. I'll go hear what the Socialists have to say."

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CHAPTER VIII

PERHAPS if Mary had analyzed her thoughts she would have realized that she wanted to go to the Socialist meeting, not so much that she thought the churches had failed her as that George Trevanion might be among the Socialists. She had forbidden him to call except at infrequent intervals.

It was understood, too, that now his calls were to be made on her mother. Angry as she was with the circumstances of life, she would not have dared to enter the "lair" (she had heard it called a "lair" by her father) if George Trevanion had not proposed to go there. She knew that she must give him up. She knew that they could not spend their time together as friends. She knew that if she saw him often, he would assume that their engagement had been revived. She could not permit that. If her father had not died, and the great problem of caring for four persons at home had not been thrust upon her, her interior life would not have been so terribly disturbed by the failure of the foundations of her religious beliefs. In fact, had she not been so utterly desolate, so apparently without support in a lonely world, she would not have rushed for consolation to Dr. Wortley's church on that fatal day.

Two things had happened of late that had made the dread specter poverty very evident to her and her mother. The great Dane, beloved by her father as a prince of dogs, lent to a distant

friend during his illness, had to be sent away—sold, in fact. They could not afford to feed him; and, then, too, the telephone bill was paid for the last time. The great Dane, carefully and aristocratically brought up since his puppyhood, had given the Coynes a certain distinction in the neighborhood, and the possession of a telephone marked their equality with their neighbors. Even the boys felt that something dreadful had happened as a result of their father's death, when Holger had to go.

"We can't feed you all!" Mrs. Coyne had said petulantly, in answer to their complaints. The boys were so shocked that she burst into tears of remorse the moment she had uttered the words.

Mary thought of these events, so small to others, but meaning so much to her, as she went home. She loved her mother, but at that moment she would have willingly gone anywhere else than home. She knew that she would hear a series of useless suggestions, mingled with tears. It was hopeless to ask her mother to go with her to a Socialists' club, she knew. She would take Amy. It could do Amy no harm, surely. The club must be a very respectable place if George Trevanion went there. It was held in the Turner's Hall, where gymnastics and private theatricals, in German, formed a programme on Sunday afternoons in the winter. She *must* take Amy; for she felt almost sure that Amy would go out herself if she left her.

Past the fence, on the opposite corner of the street, Mary caught a glimpse of Amy. Her white frock and straw hat were plainly outlined

against the glowing crimson of the Virginia creeper. It was Amy, and Amy not alone. Mary recognized her companion as the Morton boy. He wore a tall hat and a morning coat, and carried a silver-tipped cane. Amy was looking up into his face and giggling, with a grown-up air, that made the elder sister's heart stand still. Was this her baby girl, her charming and simple, dimple-cheeked little sister? There was no harm in it at all, Mary reflected. Why should Amy not be permitted to go about on Sunday afternoons with a young companion or two? There could be no harm in it. "Oh, I wish," she thought, "father were alive! He would know!"

Young Morton's looks did not please her. If he had been a neighbor's son, in and out of the garden, like Arthur March, it would have been different; and she began to have a suspicion that the whistle that made Amy so desirous of going into the street came from the son of the man on The Hills. She knew that there would be little use of drawing her mother's attention to her vague alarms. Her mother was curiously optimistic; her sheltered life had made her so. Mary imagined her saying, "Amy can't help the boy's liking her. When I was sixteen I almost had a proposal."

When she reached home, however, she did mention what she had seen. Mrs. Coyne raised her head from her hymn-book only long enough to say:

"I am glad Amy is good friends with the son of such a superior family. She's like me; she prefers nice people."

"Superior family!" Mary bit her lip. Well, she would hear what the Socialists thought of that "superior" family.

"I've always been that way, Mary. Some of the members of your father's family were inclined to find fault with me for being rather more interested in cultured people. It was much more agreeable to know people who had æsthetic tastes than to associate with people that didn't know a portière from a lambrequin, and who put chromos of the Infant Samuel Slept everywhere. And if I leaned to people with money, it's because you can't have culture without money. You may have taste, but you can't have culture. I remember how much I wanted two tambourines for each side of the mantelpiece, when we lived in Asbury —it was the time when old spinning-wheels were going out, and tambourines, painted with Morris roses (William Morris was the man that invented the Morris chair), were just coming in. But I couldn't afford it. And then I had almost an offer to join the Colonial Dames, beeause an ancestor of mine was a witch——"

"Oh mother!" exclaimed Mary.

"Yes" (Mrs. Coyne closed her hymn-book), "and she wasn't a collateral either; it was a direct descent. She was burned or hanged at Salem— I forget which. And I'd have been a Colonial, or maybe it was pre-Colonial, if I could have afforded it. It would have immensely improved our social condition with the congregations, but I couldn't think of it—I believe we needed new sheets or something just then. It was always happening like that. Just as I got a grip on

culture or social position, shoes or measles or something came up like a deluge, and stopped the way." (Mrs. Coyne sighed.) "Not but what we were happy."

"Where's Amy gone, mother?"

"Oh, somewhere!—and your father suggested that I ought to found a society of descendants of Salem Witches, and make it very exclusive. I was not sure whether he was in fun or in earnest. One thing is certain: you can't have culture or social position in this country without money; and if Amy likes to go with nice people, I shall not prevent her."

Mary sighed. She saw now how well her father had managed his family—silently, with an affectionate tolerance of his wife's foibles, and with the great power of turning them to advantage.

"I am taking Amy to a lecture to-night." Mary had smoothed her hair before the mirror between the two windows, noticing as she did so that two perpendicular lines had appeared for a moment on her forehead. She smoothed them out at once. "I will not grow old just beeause I am worried."

"A lecture? Oh, I suppose George Trevanion gave you the tickets, and I hope it will be quite right for Amy to hear! These lecturers say such queer things nowadays."

"George Trevanion will be there."

Mrs. Coyne said nothing in reply, but a contented smile came to her lips. All might come right now.

"Oh, I forgot! Amy said she was going to church with a friend."

"Amy will go with me," said Mary firmly. "Mother," she began—but, looking at her mother's face, she recognized how useless talk would be. She must bear the responsibility of Amy alone.

"I can't lock her up," she thought bitterly; "and if I try to reason with her, mother will be against me. I'm so horribly alone!"

She stood looking out into the front garden. In the coming shadows she could see the tea roses waiting for the frost, and the gorgeous dahlias defying it. Their splendid flames seemed warm enough to melt the winter snow. And behind them, against the fence, the Virginia clematis showed some sprays. Arthur March crossed the little lawn in the next garden. Arthur was carrying a pail of water. Mrs. March was an Englishwoman, and she would have no tea that was not made from perfectly fresh water. Arthur had taken her father's place in the bookstore, though he did not speak of it. Mary smiled and moved her head. Her father had always liked Arthur.

If Amy had only gone walking with Arthur instead of that dreadful Morton boy! Arthur was about twenty-four years of age, blonde like his mother, with a fresh color, very blue eyes, a long body and rather short legs; for this reason he affected, on Sunday, a frock coat and a tall hat. But, thus attired, he was not ashamed to cross the front garden carrying his mother's glittering tin pail.

"Them Marches, though they are good folks,

never draw the line," said Mrs. Coyne's voice, at Mary's elbow. "Look at Arthur March! He has no idea of the fitness of things. A high hat and a tin pail!" Mrs. Coyne added, with great contempt: "Think of a crude creature like that taking your father's place in the store! Blood will tell!" (Mary knew that her mother was thinking of her descent from the Salem Witches.) "It would have been a great deal better if he had stuck to his father's blacksmith shop."

"I think so, too, mother," Mary replied quietly. "Horses must be shod, but people can do without books."

"But what if automobiles drive out the horses?" Mrs. Coyne laughed, but checked herself. It was the Sabbath; besides, if the neighbors should hear her so soon after—nevertheless, she knew she had made a "hit."

"People like us—and the Marches can get on only by selling the necessities of life—bread or coffins."

"How you talk, Mary! Madeline La Clare came in just after you went out. I must say she cheered me up. The Irish always cheer you up. Their faith sustains them."

"Supper, my dear mother! Here comes Amy! You talk to her or get her to play a tune while I act as cook to-night. I hear the boys yelling in the back yard; they expect pork and beans!" Mary's spirits had risen; Amy was at home. "I am sure they are as hungry as young wolves in winter time."

Amy had come in, flushed and radiant, her big white hat, with its black bows, shading her danc-

ing eyes. A bunch of red roses was fastened in her belt. Mrs. Coyne burst into tears at once.

"Roses!" she exclaimed. "Roses—colored roses!"

"What's the matter, mother?" demanded Amy, abashed. "I'm sure they're very pretty. A friend gave them to me."

"Oh, you heartless girl! To wear colored flowers, and your father scarcely cold in the grave!"

Mary appeared from the kitchen, her attitude one of alarm.

"Oh, it's only mother objecting to the color of my roses! It's terrible, mother, the way you go on. I never see you without your finding fault with something. I'm sure I think of dad all the time, but I can't always be *talking* of him. He wouldn't mind my wearing flowers, I know."

"But the neighbors—the whole place!" wailed Mrs. Coyne.

"I'll put them in water, Amy."

Mary took the rich blooms in her hand. Her depression returned as she saw that they were hothouse flowers, and no florist in Orvisville opened his shop on Sunday. They must have come from one of the conservatories on The Hills.

"Mother just makes life wretched for me," said Amy. "I hate to stay in the house."

"We're going to a lecture to-night," Mary answered—"or rather a debate. As you study civics at the high school, I think you might find it interesting."

A shade crossed Amy's face.

"A debate!" interposed Mrs. Coyne. "I thought you said a lecture. A serious lecture,

with sacred music, is suitable for the Sabbath; but a debate? I never heard of a debate being held on the Lord's Day. If dear Amy does find it dull in the house, with her poor old mother, it would be more proper for her to take a walk with her young companions. When I was her age——"

"Yes, mother," said Amy, brightening, "I promised to go with some friends to church, and then for a little stroll."

"That's much better. You'd better go too, Mary, to church and for a walk."

"Oh, Mary wasn't invited!" said Amy quickly. "It's just our crowd—young people."

"You can give up your crowd for once, Amy," observed Mary, as she was closing the kitchen door. "You are going with me to hear Mr. Trevanion speak!"

"You'll *have* to go," Mrs. Coyne said. "When Mary makes up her mind, there can be no argument. The only thing is to prevent her from making it up too often. Poor George! I don't believe he has gumption enough to open his mouth in public. He has presence, of course. Now, although your father had a great gift for preaching, he never had any presence until he measured forty-nine around the waist. That made him look more weighty, more dependable. George is a little too thin, and there is nothing about him that I call 'presence.' Still he'll never make a good speech."

"I suppose I'll have to go with Mary, then?"

"Yes. Besides, you must tell me just how he speaks. Mary's so close-mouthed about some

things; and I believe if George were a failure as a speaker, she'd just keep it to herself."

Amy pouted and went into the kitchen, somewhat consoled by the prospect of hearing George Trevanion as an orator.

"If any of the girls come for me," she said to her mother, with emphasis, at supper, "just say that I had to break my engagement."

"Exactly," corroborated Mary, showing no compunction.

CHAPTER IX

THE meeting of the "Bebel Club," spoken of usually among the members as the Bebel Centrum, was held on Sunday nights in the hall of the Turn Verein. Mary, accompanied by the reluctant Amy, arrived early. The hall was large and square, lit by electric lights in round, white globes suspended in a ring from the whitewashed ceiling. The walls were very white and clean, and dazzling in the reflected and unshaded light. At the far end was the stage, set with some scene from a German fairy-tale, in which had figured a boat drawn by a swan; for the swan and boat were still visible against a background of a river with castles, presumably the Rhine. A grand piano occupied the center of the stage, draped with the American flag. Two men were adjusting the instrument as Mary and Amy entered. There were six chairs on the side of the stage, for the speakers.

The hall filled slowly. Some of the women wore scarfs over their heads; and one, in a very red and orange shawl, carried a baby. The people who came first seemed to be foreigners—dark-eyed Russian Jews, an Italian or two, and a number of German men and women, very well dressed, who took the front seats with an air of proprietorship. After a while Arthur March came in. He stood in the door for a few minutes, and then joined the girls, uttering an exclamation of surprise.

"You seem to be the only white people here," he said, laughing. "I came because I heard that Dr. Wortley was going to debate with the Socialists here to-night. I saw the challenge in the paper. But it seems that he didn't think it dignified enough. It's a pity. I'm against Socialism on principle, Miss Coyne; but I can't define the principle." He laughed, and showed a very white set of teeth under his blonde mustache. "And I thought Dr. Wortley would knock these people into a cocked hat. When he talks against Socialism in the pulpit he has it all his own way, and the papers print what he says. Nobody can talk back. I'd like to see him here and hear them talking back!"

Mary smiled, and made room for him beside Amy. Into the seat next to her glided a slim girl, half covered by a long automobile veil. Mary had an impression of having seen her before. And just as George Trevanion and the other speakers came upon the stage, the newcomer said in a voice that Mary had heard somewhere:

"Good-evening!"

Amy, who had been pouting since her arrival, began to giggle. The appearance of Arthur March raised her spirits, and this was her way of showing it. Two little girls, dressed in white, with deep red sashes, came from the wings, and began a duet, on themes from German folk-songs. The people in the front rows cried out: "Bis! bis!" Mary thought that they were hissing at first, and instantly protested to her unknown companion. But she was reassured when the little girls came out again, and played with me-

thodical brilliancy "A Shower of Pearls." They were much applauded, and Amy whispered that she did not consider this "sacred music."

A tall man arose from the chair. He had thick black mustaches, and his hair was long; he wore evening clothes; his accent was rather thick and guttural, and he chose his words carefully. He had the *blaisure* to announce a symposium on Socialistic theories and practices. He regretted that the Rev. Dr. Wortley had not accepted the challenge of the Bebel Centrum to present his views, not behind the backs of the members, but before their faces. Nevertheless, no advantage would be taken of his absence, due to his fear of breaking the Sabbath, not to his fear of the eloquence of his opponents. (Laughter and applause.) He himself would open the symposium in a few words. He hoped that anybody in the hall, who wished to speak on any question raised by him, would not hesitate to interrupt him. The motto of the Bebel Centrum was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," and he hoped they would all live up to it. Even the ladies present were privileged to speak.

"How kind!" said a young Jewess, sitting almost at the speaker's feet.

There was laughter, in which Amy, who had begun to enjoy herself, joined.

"There were people who confounded Socialists with Anarchists and Nihilists; people who believed that Socialism meant utter destruction; people who, like the Rev. Dr. Wortley, held that Socialists stood for free love. For myself, I, Hans Spracht, a simple man, can not see why

a respected clergyman like Dr. Wortley, who has married in his own church—a man who was divorced twice—can object to free love."

The speaker paused. Mr. Spracht received the acclamations he expected. Arthur March wriggled in his seat.

"You'd better leave Dr. Wortley's name out of this discussion," he said, in an irritable voice.

"Louder,—louder!"

Arthur March stood up again.

"I say that, as Dr. Wortley is not here, it's only fair play not to say things about him. You'd better leave his name out, I say again, if you're going to talk about him in a way that puts him in the wrong, because he can't defend himself."

"But your churchmen are doing that every day, are they not?" asked Hans Spracht. "You condemn us without a hearing; you represent us as fiends who would destroy the family. Is it not so?"

A chorus of assent came from the benches.

Arthur March kept his place.

"Whether it is or not," he said, gaining courage, "is not the question for me to argue. I am here to discover what you have to say for yourselves, and I find you attacking the absent—doing, in fact, the very thing you protest against."

Hans Spracht, who was disgusted at the utterance of this young, blonde, intelligent-looking stranger during his speech, lost his temper.

"You defend the clergyman, yes! I sneer at the churchmen! The poor suffer, the orphans are hungry. Capital crushes out of them all pride,

all self-respect. It gives as alms what *belongs* to us of the lower classes——"

"There are no lower classes in the United States," interrupted March. "You are of the lower classes only when you look up and cringe, or look down and scorn."

"You lie!" cried Spracht. "I *am* of the lower classes——"

"Order!" called out Trevanion. "You are not permitted to use such language here."

"I am not *permitted?*" Spracht's face became livid, and he brushed aside a great lock of black hair. "Is that what you call liberty?"

"It may be liberty to call a man a liar, in that tone," said March; "but it's not fraternity, though in some cases it may mean fraternity."

There was a laugh. Spracht's face worked as if he had St. Vitus' dance.

"What are the churchmen doing for the poor?" he shrieked. "What do they do but build fine edifices? What do they do to free the poor, to help them?"

A rich contralto voice came from the back of the hall.

"Will you be quiet," it said, "and not make a madman of yourself? What would beeome of millions of orphans if it wasn't for the Catholic Church? And I can say a good word for the other churches in the country, too. Sure, what are you and the likes of you doing for God's poor?"

Every head was turned. Near the door, outlined against the dead white wall, stood Madeline La Clare, conspicuous in a red golf jacket.

"Ah!" exclaimed Spracht, laughing. "A lady speaks! Poor? We are poor—we others. What can we do for the poor except uplift them to the truth. But the churches—bah!"

"Eh, bien! Vieux type!" exclaimed Madeline, breaking into French, as she frequently did; she had learned all she knew of correct speech in the convent of Montreal. "I am no speaker in English; but, sure, I'll do my best, though I wish that some gentleman would take up the case for the churches. Couldn't you say a word for the churches, Mr. Trevanion?"

Mary raised her head, expectantly.

"No, Miss, I couldn't. I wouldn't be here if I could say much good of them."

"Bad cess to you!" cried Madeline. "I am no speaker, but I'd like to say that the people who support orphans and schools and homes for fallen women are poor themselves—there was a time when many of them were poorer than anybody here. Do you think that the Catholic Church in this country is made up of rich people? Do you think that the people who built our churches are capitalists? The people who support the poor, who won't go to your almshouses—are they rich? You must be very ignorant if you believe that. Whatever the Protestants do—and they have done a lot—the Catholics have done more, and done it out of their poverty."

"We all know that the Catholic Church in this country does good in the dark way of the Middle Ages; but it is rich, it is proud, it is capitalistic, it is a symbol of tyranny," said Spracht, raising

his eyes to heaven. "It rules and crushes the people!"

"You omadhaun!" cried Madeline, with contempt. "It *is* the people!" And she sat down.

"By George!" said Arthur March, "she's great!"

"Isn't it lovely?" whispered the girl next to Mary. "I'm glad Theckla brought me. That Irish girl's talk sent thrills up my spine."

Mary looked appealingly at Trevanion. He was silent.

A placid-looking man, with a white tie and a frock coat, arose. He spoke deliberately, with a distinct New York pronunciation, in which all the *r's* were softened.

"My colleague and brother Mr. Spracht," he began indulgently, "has reason for his heat. He and his family have suffered much in other lands; and, seeking refuge here, he has been disappointed. He expected to find equality, and the means of so ordering his life freely that he could pursue happiness in his own way. We boast of equality; we make it fundamental in our Declaration of Independence; but it does not exist among us. The churches——"

"Leave out the churches," exclaimed March, "and the synagogues as well! They are not backward in helping their poor. Tell us why we should be Socialists. That's what I came to hear."

"Go on, Mr. Baldwin!" interposed Mr. Spracht, recovering his position as moderator. "Go on!"

Mr. Baldwin smiled.

"I admit," he said, "that the gentleman on the floor enunciated the truth—a new truth to me—when he said it was the people who, especially in the Catholic Church in this country, supplied the money for all its works. But the Catholic Church is a magnificent imperial oligarchy, in which the laity has no vote."

"Are you a Papist?" cried out a voice, with a Scotch burr in it, from the group about the door.

"I am not," answered Mr. Baldwin, in a voice that betrayed deep gratitude.

"Then leave the Papists to complain. If they're satisfied, it's not your business."

"Right you are, sawney," called Madeline; "though I guess you're a blooming Orangeman yourself."

Mr. Spracht rapped on the floor with his stick.

"Order!" he said.

"Vote!" cried the Scotch voice. "Money talks."

"Order!" said Mr. Spracht. "Order!"

Then the speaker continued:

"I shall now proceed. Briefly, we are not here for the discussion of principles already accepted by us. But as there are present some strangers, who will, I hope, later be friends and brothers, it is best, I presume, to give a short explanation of our tenets. First, we are determined that the control of the methods of money-making shall be taken from the individual—the individual who controls capital and the man who possesses it—and transferred to the nation. In this way capital will be used by the nation or State for the good of the people. In this way shall perfect equality be obtained. I admit that Socialism sets up

standards of right and wrong which the conventional and traditional Christians will not accept. But may we not hope that the Zeit-Geist will so hasten the process of evolution that right and wrong may soon be viewed by so-called Christians in our light?

"It is difficult for us to conceive a drastic change in political and economic conditions without an equally drastic change in ethical points of view. Socialism can not admit the existence of miracles." (Mr. Baldwin smiled engagingly.) "Birds and fishes will not multiply under our system by supernatural methods; but no man will need to be fed by charity. Spiritual, moral, and social views can not remain as they are now. Under a perfect system, in which the individual will not be permitted to create values for himself, individual possession of the methods of creating wealth will be looked on as a crime. I myself barely escaped being of the wealthy class. (He smiled: he was a well-known grocer, whose three or four shops scattered through Orvisville did not depend on the patronage of The Hills.) "I am opposed to useless controversy which makes for strife. I am a Socialist by conviction. I can not now be saved by selling all I have and giving it to the State. But a good time will come, when the State will protect me and father me, because it will be master of all I have. Then there shall be no strife among the churches. There will be a purer, more satisfactory religion——"

"And no sand in the sugar!" called out the Scotch voice from the door.

"Order!" commanded Trevanion.

"We know that all the Christian churches misrepresent us, as they were misrepresented in Old Rome, soon after the greatest philosopher of the world, except Confucius, founded their sects. We know that the churches are fighting us with all the moral weapons in their power, and that, if the Zeit-Geist had not torn from them the power to work with the State, the terrors of the Inquisition would be renewed against us."

"May I speak, Mr. Chairman?" asked March, standing up.

"Yes," said Spracht sulkily, "if Mr. Baldwin does not object."

"I do not object," answered Mr. Baldwin, blandly eyeing March. "The discussion is free."

"Well, said March hotly, "I am not much of a speaker; but, as this is a free-talk feast, I must say what I think. In the first place, I object to the assertion that the churches calumniate you. I went to hear Dr. Wortley's lecture on the subject. He was very earnest and gentlemanly. He said that you were against Christianity, and it is evident that you are. If you intend to substitute a purer religion, with Confucius at the top——"

"Not necessarily Confucius," broke in Spracht, his eyes glowing.

"Well, any old prophet at the top, for Christianity, you're against Christianity."

"But Christianity must move—pardon me for interrupting you!" said Trevanion, in a smooth, low voice that surprised Mary; she had feared that he would be a failure as a speaker, but he was calm, collected, even dominant in his manner.

"I have listened to Dr. Wortley many times, and he holds that it must move. It has now lost its miraculous character, he admits. The Bible is a book which tends to supply a philosophy of life; and, since clergymen declare that the old-fashioned Christianity is of the past, how can they object to Socialism as a pure religion of the future?"

There was great applause. The girl next to Mary laughed.

"This is just lovely!" she said. "How well he talks. I thought Socialism was a dry subject. Why, it's distinctly amusing!"

Trevanion's speech left Mary cold. The few words he said were surprisingly well uttered, but she did not like what he had said. He bowed, evidently much pleased by the general approbation.

"I can not agree, then, that any modern Christian, any enlightened Protestant Christian, can oppose Socialism, from the religious point of view. It would not be consistent with the ideas that the most intellectual Protestants—and Dr. Wortley is one of the most intellectual—hold of the evolution of religion. I wish very much indeed that he were here, to emphasize the truth of what I say. The enlightened churches, then, can not be against us."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Arthur March, gaining courage. "I *must* say that the Catholic Church, of which I am a member, will never accept the Socialist religion of the future—never admit to be false the miracles on which she is founded. I do not intend to argue," he raised his voice, as interruptions came from all sides. "I only state

the fact that the Catholic Church will always be vigorously the enemy of Socialism, if what you state is true."

"It *is* true," said Spracht sarcastically; "and yet this world moves!"

Again great applause.

"And yet she moves!" repeated Spracht, dramatically.

"The sun moves, too," observed March.

There was derisive laughter.

"I leave the answer to the scientists, not to ignorant men like you, Spracht," March said.

"We are not here, Mr. March, to call one another names, or to discuss the science of astronomy," answered Trevanion. "Mr. Baldwin will proceed."

"I know who is behind you now!" Spracht said, showing his teeth. "But I will crush him yet—I will, I swear it!"

March laughed, and sat down.

"Now that the dust of battle has blown away," began Mr. Baldwin benevolently, "I may state our position toward capital. To be rich is a crime, because no man can be rich who has not stolen what belongs to his brethren. The rich naturally control the means of production, and they who control the means of production for their own aggrandizement are criminals."

"Worthy of death!" snarled Spracht. "We must hate the rich as Dante hated tyrants."

"Thank you!" continued Mr. Baldwin, "though you put it rather strongly! When I know as I know, ladies and gentlemen, why should I conceal the truth? I have been a ragged little boy,

cold and hungry, in the streets of New York; I have snatched crusts from the gutter; and I have seen roll past me the splendid vehicles of the capitalists who gave no thought to the hungry little soul that, fainting with weakness, watched them—a little orphan boy, neglected, scorned, kicked by the rich who were happy because they were rich!" His voice lost its unctuous sound, and grew strident, while his brow became moist, and his right hand shook. "All the hope, all the joy of youth was frozen out of me, simply that the capitalist might clothe his children in furs and ride in purple and fine linen. I have seen little children die of hunger and heat next to the most luxurious abodes in New York. And in London! My God! Have you ever been in London on a winter's night—in London, the wealthiest city of the world?"

"Yes, yes!" came from some parts of the hall.

"I do not quote our theorists, Marx or Bebel, or the other great names so well known to you. I lay facts before you, as I would lay them before the Rev. Dr. Wortley if he were here. The capitalists, therefore, are criminals, to hold what they have as their own. Think of starving wives and children left, when a man dies, penniless, helpless. Children are torn from their mothers, because their mothers can not support them; thrown into institutions, like little prisoners, and sent out unfitted for the world. A time will come, under the new dispensations, when I will no longer be an individual working for myself, but a unit in a body of collectivists working for the whole. I shall not speak of 'mine,' but of 'ours.'

Now I can not do it. Circumstances are against us."

"Oh, le bon! Oh, le pur!" murmured Madeline.

Mr. Baldwin took this as a compliment, and smiled indulgently.

"I would, if we were not prevented by ordinances and criminal traditions, which would nullify my actions, be glad to be actively collectivist —to sacrifice my little individual property for the downtrodden."

"You can sell what you have and give it to the poor now," called March. "Nobody can prevent you from doing that."

"Ah," said Mr. Baldwin, gazing amiably at March through his spectacles, "that system failed long ago! If I should give away what little I have, society, as now constituted, would force it to be used individualistically."

"But you will escape your present involuntary individualism, if you give your property away," retorted March.

There was some laughter. Mr. Baldwin appealed mutely to the chairman.

"No," continued March, "I will have my say. Your handbills, distributed to-day, invited everybody to talk; and, though I came unprepared to speak, I intend to speak now. There's no use in grimacing, Mr. Spracht. You can't stop me. I've a louder voice than yours. I came to learn, and I have learned that I can not be a good citizen and a pure Socialist. I'm with you to a certain extent, but to your most important points, as a Catholic and an American, I can not assent."

"True—true!" said Spracht. "We can not accept the superstitious, the believer in the miraculous, as our brother. The American flag is the symbol of slavery."

There was an uproar. March made himself heard at last.

"Let that pass," he said. "It's not worth noticing. As a Christian, I can not accept any system not founded on Christian ethics. And you can have no system of Christian ethics without the miraculous Christ. As an American, I must die rather than be a slave, and your proposed State monopoly is simply State slaveholding."

"Good luck to you!" cried Madeline.

There were hisses and some cheers.

"I know who is behind you!" cried out Spracht, advancing to the front of the platform. "I know him. You are too much of a dumbhead to think of this yourself. I know him—the head of your superstitions. I hate him, and I will crush him."

"I am discovered," said March, laughing. "I must admit that I have talked with Father Cook on the subject. I have nothing more to say, at least to-night—but, yes, let me add one thing. You will never reach your ideal; for you will be cut up and devoured by your own child—the Syndicalist!"

"Three cheers for the Syndicalist!" exclaimed several voices.

The auditors were at once divided.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said George Trevanion, "I shall not detain you. We had better have a little music now. But I should like

to ask Mr. March to name the points in our programme which he, as the child of the Middle Ages" (there was laughter), "can accept."

"Everything that improves the material condition of men without interfering with their spiritual or temporal freedom," said March. "Most of the capitalists have assumed that their property belongs absolutely to them—that they can do what they please with it—that there is no part of it which belongs to others. When an employer will not pay a man a sufficient amount for him to live on, to marry and to bring up his children in reasonable comfort, he is accursed, when——"

"I see," said Trevanion, "you are not altogether retrograde. Let me add, for myself, that the capitalist can be convicted only by the force of justice. And that force we intend to use, irrespective of any opposition that Christianity may make. And now the 'Marseillaise'!"

The little girls came out, seated themselves at the piano, and began the prelude to Rouget de Lisle's hymn.

"Good-night, Miss Coyne!" March said at the door. "I talked too much."

"No," answered Mary gloomily, "you spoke well. But you are wrong, all the same. I hate the rich!" she broke out. "I want to see them destroyed."

"Pleasant for me, Miss Coyne!" spoke a voice at her elbow. "I saw you at my mother's the other day, and I hope to see you again. Wasn't it all too lovely and exciting? I'm glad I made Theckla bring me—my maid's a Socialist, you know. Is this Mr. Trevanion? I'm Miss Mor-

ton. I'm glad I heard you speak—you are so eloquent and reasonable. Good-night!"

Trevanion shook hands, much flattered. Mary saw his eyes following the other girl as she entered the motor car.

"I hate the rich!" she whispered bitterly. "Come, Amy!"

"Good-night, Amy!" March said. "It's war to the knife between Socialism and the Catholic Church, Trevanion. I have found that out to-night."

"Good-night, Arthur!" said Trevanion. "If that's true, as I think it is, I shall be against you. But for the present let's be friends."

"I'm for freedom!" March called out, as he strode off in the darkness.

He saw, with surprise, that Trevanion did not join Amy and her sister.

CHAPTER X

ON SUNDAY morning, the Orvisville *Gazette* contained an account of the symposium at the Bebel Club. The reporter made it as amusing as possible. Trevanion was caricatured, Spracht represented as a male Fury, the whole proceeding described as contemptible and disorderly. Only Arthur March was treated respectfully, and there was even an editorial paragraph on his "clever and sound" opinions.

"He represented the Catholic Church, and, indeed, all orthodox Christianity. He made it clear that his Church has placed all vested interests under immense obligations by holding firmly to the old and tried doctrine that a man who owns may do what he pleases with his own. Though never in sympathy with the Roman Church as a political power, we hail her as the best police force Capital can encourage in protecting its interests. Mr. March, who is the representative of our principal bookstore, is a magnetic speaker."

Father Cook smiled when, smoking his after-breakfast cigar, he read this.

"Police force, eh?" he said. "Police force, to see that Capital is omnipotent and vested rights oligarchic! I think the Church holds a different point of view."

He rubbed his hand over his cheek thoughtfully, and discovered that he was not shaved; and Mrs. Isaac Welterman had telephoned, making

an appointment at ten o'clock. He groaned. He hated to shave, and he disliked long conversations with ladies. He always found conversations with ladies long. He was a shy man, and he had not attained the art of cutting short a flow of words. Mrs. Isaac Welterman had taken a leading part in his bazaar at Christmas, and it would be ungrateful not to see her.

At ten o'clock Father Cook, rosy after his shave, and perfumed with bay rum, waited for Mrs. Welterman. Her motor car appeared at five minutes after ten. She looked about Father Cook's bare parlor. There was an engraving of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" on the gray-tinted walls, and a large palm branch nailed above it. A deal table, covered with a red and white cloth, on which reposed a leather-covered book, marked "register," and three chairs, made up the furniture of the room. Mrs. Welterman nearly tripped against a bit of machinery of some kind that lay on the floor. She was tall, very slight, and very graceful. She had a young face, above which white hair was piled high under her purple toque; and her large dark eyes, unusual in glow and depth, seemed to be akin in some way to the big ruby which glowed on a pin at the throat of her heliotrope-colored coat.

"I must say," she began, with a slight foreign accent, "that all the boasted art of your Church has not done much for your room, Father. Do let me send you a better reproduction of the Leonardo than that."

"You may send one if you like," said Father Cook. "I am too poor to refuse even an art treas-

ure, and there are always bazaars. But I can't give this up. It hung for years and years in the house of an old friend of mine. It was the only treasure of a poor old washerwoman, and she gave it to me out of gratitude. In return for your promised engraving you may have that cash register machine on the floor; it won't work, but it might be of *some* use. It was sent me by another parishioner as security for fifty dollars I lent him. I must thank you again for your kindness in helping to mend the church roof. I have not seen you since the bazaar."

"I was very glad to be of use, Father." Mrs. Welterman gathered her draperies about her and sat down. "You see, my father was a Spanish Jew—Jacob Ferdinandez—and I have no prejudices. I know very well that Christianity fulfils the promises of the faith of my fathers; and I wish Christians," she added bitterly, "would remember what they owe to *us*."

"They do," answered Father Cook. "If I were a Jew, though I thank Heaven I'm not——"

Mrs. Welterman smiled—one could not possibly become angry with Father Cook.

"I'd be quite silly with pride. I'd be an aristocrat of the aristocrats. I'd never forget that my race had given us the greatest poetry in the world."

"The worst of it is that we Jews do forget, and become vulgar. It is our vulgarity that you people despise, perhaps, and not our race."

"I haven't had time to despise anybody, and I'm not sure that I'm not vulgar myself some-

times. Once, when Mrs. Morton had me to dine with her, I forgot to use the oyster fork. She has never asked me since. But, you see, you are *de race;* I'm plebeian."

"You put me in a good humor with myself, and one needs it on Monday morning. And now, Father, I want you to help me. There is no synagogue here; and Isaac, you know, has no special religion, but he wants to be just. He will not let me go among the Russian Jews. He says they're parasites and anarchists."

"That isn't altogether true," replied Father Cook. "There are good people among them, and their children ought to have their chance."

"I say so, too. Now, I want something to do. Isaac has taken care of all his poor relations. His counting house in New York is crowded with Weltermans from Hamburg, and he half supports a Jewish hospital; but *I* want something to do. I want to do something that seems *good* to me, in a personal way."

Father Cook rose and stood, a short, rotund figure, in the light of the window. He drummed lightly with his fingers on the pane.

"Couldn't you help some of the young girls?"

"As you helped Madeline La Clare?"

"You know of *that!*" He flushed a little. "Don't speak of it. For Madeline's sake, it is better forgotten."

"She tells everybody, principally because she hates Spracht and is grateful to you."

The priest shook his head.

"There are many things better forgotten. A kindness done is *done.* If it isn't silently marked

to one's account above, it isn't worth much. I know Madeline's mother is grateful. She gave me that work on the wall—her only art treasure." Father Cook smiled, and showed a fine set of teeth that seemed to reflect the twinkle in his eyes. "Spracht's clever. I read the other day his paper on 'The Morality of Maeterlinck.' It shows that the theories of Spracht and Maeterlinck are fearfully immoral."

"Maeterlinck! I adore Maeterlinck!"

"His plays are charming—some of them; but his theory that chastity is no longer a virtue is quite in keeping with the modern ideas of Spracht and his crowd."

"Times have changed. There is a new morality."

"It is just against this new morality—an old Pagan immorality—that women like you can fight. But, really, Mrs. Welterman, why should you not go to Dr. Wortley? He is more in your line; he understands all about ethical culture, and I don't. Besides, as becomes an old man, I take the liberty of speaking plainly at times, and that might shock you."

"It might shock Mrs. Morton, perhaps, who delights in French novels, but not a woman like me—old-fashioned and domestic." A flush came to her olive-colored cheeks as she added: "I didn't go to Dr. Wortley—though I respect him greatly—because he'd think I'd taken up charity work in order to climb a little higher. You know that, rich as we are, there are many steps in the social ladder above us. We're Jews, and these purse-proud *parvenus,* who don't know that David

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wrote poetry, or the difference between Mozart and Beethoven, or between the Talmud and the Koran, look down on us."

Father Cook smiled.

"Their culture isn't very thick. I showed Mr. Wadsworth Morton a first edition of the *Spectator,* out of my great-uncle's library in Baltimore. He said he thought it ought to be rebound."

They both laughed.

"You don't come to me for social advancement —I'd never suspect that. My dear Mrs. Welterman, you might be happier if you didn't irritate yourself by thinking that the Gentiles on The Hills look down on you. That forces you to look up, doesn't it?"

"No!" answered Mrs. Welterman, her eyes flashing.

Father Cook laughed again.

"Well, yes," said Mrs. Welterman, half laughing.

"And you, Mrs. Welterman, probably descended from David, through many very cultivated and elegant Spanish Jews—your name might have been Medena Cœli, if your people had married Christians in time—you eat your heart out because Mrs. Wadsworth Morton, who knows as little about her grandfather as her grandfather knew about her, does not invite you to her 'select' dinner parties. And she leaves me me out, too, owing to the horror of the oyster fork."

Mrs. Welterman smiled.

"You make little things seem very little. It is

a time of little things," she added, with a sigh. "People like my husband and myself have no longer any fixed religion. We break all the rules our forefathers held. Of course, we hold fast to the Unity of God—without that our race would have been a failure. But surely," and a humorous gleam came into her dark eyes and seemed to be reflected in the ruby, "we are so indifferent to the forms of religion that we might as well be Christians. I notice, by the way, in the *Gazette* this morning, that, though Dr. Wortley declined the Socialist's challenge, one of your parishioners turned out to be an orator."

"Yes; March—Arthur March. I think that Arthur will be astonished to find out how eloquent he was. He's a modest chap, with no nonsense about him. And that reminds me that it might please you to help a family in which he is interested—the Coynes, his next-door neighbors. He seems worried about them."

"Coyne? Where have I heard the name? Oh, yes! The Mortons were at the country club yesterday afternoon; we were talking servants, of course; and Mrs. Morton told me about a young woman named Coyne who had been fearfully 'cheeky' to her. She actually refused a good place as sewing maid because she said it would prevent her from doing her duty to her family. (*I* call that Socialism.) And Mr. Morton struck in and said that Coyne, her father, was an upstart, and did not know his place. Isaac laughed at that—Mr. Morton is *so* aristocratic! But, really, I can't see what I can do for people

whose daughter will not work for good wages because she wants to be home at night."

"She is quite right," answered the priest gently. "She isn't bound to neglect her duties at home, if she is not absolutely forced by the direst poverty, to accept wages abroad. That's not Socialism. It brings me around, too, to what I was coming to. March tells me that there is a younger sister, who is pretty, gay, harmless, and thoughtless. She goes to the high school, and there's a group of big boys and girls there that need watching. The mother can't control her; the brothers are mere children. You spoke of Madeline a moment ago. You know how near she was to destruction in the hands of Spracht and his companions, and how it was prevented only by sending her to Montreal and putting her in good surroundings."

"Oh, yes, we all know that! But couldn't you——"

"No. You see I am a Catholic priest; Madeline was a Catholic. I really have enough to do among my own people. Thank Heaven, I've an energetic assistant! But we both have enough to do. Since we've opened St. Cecilia's Hall, our young people are less on the streets at night. (I couldn't have done it without Mr. Welterman's check and some assistance from Mr. Morton.) The theatrical glee clubs and 'promenades' keep them busy. Seriously, something ought to be done in Orvisville to hold the young people out of the streets after dark. It's scandalous. You see, too, Mrs. Welterman, the Coynes are Protestants and I'd get a bad reputation for prose-

lytizing if I interfered. And, by the way," he added, "Ikey is here a good deal."

"You mean," said Ikey's mother, "that I would accuse you of proselytizing? I often think," she spoke impatiently, "that Ikey would make a good Rabbi if it were fashionable to have Rabbis in families of our class. He *is* good, but a bookworm. He comes to consult your books. His thesis wraps him up. But should he become a Catholic—which he will not—I shouldn't care, if it will only keep him *good.* But it would break his grandparents' hearts. It is strange," she added almost bitterly, "my second son, Herman, is like my people; Murillo might have painted him. But he's impossible."

"I think you may be of use to the Coynes. Young Morton and Herman—both 'rusticated' —are, I hear, hanging about the young Coyne girl and her friends."

"The brazen creature!"

Father Cook smiled.

"And the innocent young Morton!"

"I knew that he would lead poor Herman astray."

"Pack Herman off to a strict college at once, if his father can not control him at home."

"He has no time."

"Ah!" the priest sighed. "But the young Coyne girl is not brazen at all. She loves the gaiety and freedom of the streets. If you really want something to do, see what you can do for the Coynes. I promise you that I shall not try to make a Catholic of Ikey."

"Ikey a Catholic!" she laughed. "He'll never

look like anything but a Hamburg Jew, with spectacles. It would be a great stroke of business for Isaac. He'd send Ikey out at once as an agent among his good Catholic customers—oh, the chauffeur has some flowers for your altar—some white roses and orchids."

"You are very good! I have warned you about Ikey, Mrs. Welterman. Herman is possibly only a little thoughtless. Do see the Coynes! But think about it first. Remember that the Mortons' dislike to them ought not to influence you."

"The Mortons!" said Mrs. Welterman disdainfully. "You may be sure that if Wadsworth Morton gave you a check, he will want something back for it. Thank you! Good-by!"

"It's late," murmured Father Cook, looking delightedly at the great mass of white roses and purple orchids on the table. "Women do talk; but, for a shy man, I think I did pretty well myself. So the girl simply refused work that would prevent her from doing her duty, and I've heard her called a Socialist three times since Saturday. I am afraid that Mr. Dives on The Hills thinks that poor Miss Lazarus has no rights."

CHAPTER XI

MARY COYNE'S Monday opened in the bluest manner. The problem that worried her was still unsolved. How to live on a precarious five dollars a week had been in no way broached at the Bebel Club Symposium. Mary caught herself wishing that the Socialists' programme included some receipts for cheap living. And she had a feeling, too, that the Socialist meetings would draw George Trevanion further and further from her. Her faith had been unsettled, it was true; but his seemed to have gone utterly, and she did not like the thought of this. "A woman might be good," she said to herself, "without religion; but a man!" That was different. And where might not this "pure and good" Socialistic religion of the future lead him?

To make matters worse, a cold mist turning to rain obscured the sky. She was obliged to rekindle the kitchen fire and take her sewing into that room—for now the saving of coals was most important. Mrs. Coyne had gone to make her daily journey to the grocer's, groaning because the absence of the telephone necessitated her going out.

Mary had not been alone with her unpleasant thoughts very long when Madeline La Clare came in, without knocking. Mary was heartily glad to see her. Madeline threw off her glazed cap and waterproof coat with great energy, and embraced Mary.

"We're two old maids," she said. "I sent word that I wasn't going over to the shop to-day, because I'm wearying for a talk with you, *acushla!* I'm entitled to a holiday. Sure they can't do without me at the wages I'm getting, and I know that!"

Madeline's deep blue eyes sparkled, in her vivid, olive-colored face, with the zest of life, and her cheeks glowed from the beating of the wind. She was not tall, but her manner was so energetic that she gave the impression of stature. She had what Mrs. Coyne called "presence." Her hands were white and well kept; her hair worn demurely around a small, well-shaped head, and her long, black eyelashes, dropped very often on her cheeks, gave her what she called her "butter-wouldn't-melt-in-her-mouth" look. Her blouse and skirt were a perfect blending of taste and simplicity.

"Oh, Madeline, I am so glad to see you!" said Mary, dropping the mass of silk and spangles in her lap to kiss the guest.

"And I'm so glad to be here! What are you sewing? A frock? Very *chic* it is, too."

"For Mrs. Jensen, the wife of the Congregationalist minister. She's going to a party."

Madeline held the dress up, looking at it critically.

"Not bad," she said. "You've almost a Parisian touch. Just let me change the tunic. I shouldn't feel very comfortable if I had to wear it that way; my line is draping, you know."

Madeline took the frock, and seemed to enjoy

herself thoroughly in manipulating the black and glittering silk.

"Marvelous!" said Mary. "You're a genius, Madeline."

"I'm not an ivory-topped simpleton," responded Madeline. "You see, I was at St. Rose's in Montreal for three years; and what Sister Monique doesn't know about drapery isn't worth knowing. She taught me well, and she gave me many hints about designing, too. Nothing can stop me from drawing big money next year, if I want to sell my young blood for gold. I don't know, though, that any money would make me a slave. My, won't Mr. Jensen's parishioners rub their eyes when his wife comes to their party wearing a frock like that! Mr. Jensen's your pastor, isn't he?"

"No—" Mary paused. "I haven't any pastor. He preached a very good sermon on the Red Sea once, but now I don't know whether there ever was a Red Sea or not."

"What's the difference?" asked Madeline. "Religion doesn't depend on the Red Sea, does it? If you were like me, you'd just go to your duties, keep out of serious sin—God between us and all harm!—and have as good a time as you could. And it's on the clergyman's wife you're wasting a dress like that! As soon as you've fixed the drapery I'll try it on for you. It isn't *décolleté,* is it?"

"No," replied Mary, in horror. 'The congregation wouldn't stand for that."

"Provincial!" said Madeline, arching her brows. "Mother sends you lots of bouquets.

She's very busy this morning washing some lace for Mrs. Morton. Mary, dear, when I think of mother's life, I feel like going down on my knees and saying my *Paters* and *Aves* to her, as I did when I was a little tot. There she is, just a washerwoman, but making a joy of her work. I could cry tears of blood when I think of the heartbreaks I gave her when I was seventeen, running about the streets, romping with the boys and girls, never realizing my danger until I found myself in New York on the train one night, half dazed with drugged lemonade, and old Spracht on the seat beside me. Father Cook, who was in the next car, saw me. He came in with the conductor; and, though Spracht swore I was his daughter he was taking to my mother in New York, Father Cook carried the day. And glad I was when he sent me to Montreal to the Sisters. ('Twas there my dead father came from.) 'Twas the making of me; for poor mother couldn't have looked after me properly. I had got beyond her, though I was very simple, too."

"Spracht!" said Mary. "He has an evil face. I wonder somebody doesn't kill him."

"He's never forgiven Father Cook. But he is as cunning as a fox. There are hundreds in this town that believe he is the friend of the workingman."

"Madeline," said Mary, suddenly making up her mind to be frank, "I'm worried about Amy. She's pretty, you know, and she looks much older than she is; and I don't know what to do——"

Madeline waited.

"I can't speak to anybody but you, because

you'll understand. If I spoke to anybody else it would seem as if I were accusing Amy of something wrong. A word of gossip sticks to a girl (no matter how young she is when it is uttered) all her life."

"I know that, dear!" said Madeline, a mist of tears coming to her eyes. "The world is heartless and inconsistent. But God takes care of His own."

Mary sighed.

"I came to talk to you about Amy," continued Madeline. "Among other things, I hear you've given up Trevanion, and that he's taking it hard. Well, people in our circumstances can't be pickers and choosers, and you know your own business best. Now, there isn't the least harm in Amy, but she's gay and your mother spoils her. And there are many boys and girls at the high school that ought to be earning their living by the sweat of their brow and the strength of their arms. Mother often says so. The teachers set them a good example, 'tis true; but, sure, the teachers themselves can't mention the name of the Blessed Trinity or teach Christian morality. 'Twould be sectarianism! *Ah, Sainte Vierge! Vois tu cette chose!*"

Mary listened intently; she felt that help was coming. Madeline, from her energetic Irish mother and her courageous French-Canadian father, had inherited a certain fearlessness that inspired hope.

"I've thought out a plan—but there's somebody at the front door. Run, while I stay here

and put on this dress so that you can see about the drapery."

The front door bell rang again. Mary, imagining that the visitor was a possible customer, hastened into the hall. She opened the door. Mrs. Wadsworth Morton, with her hands in a large yellow muff, stood on the doorstep.

"Oh, it's *you!*" she said; and then, noticing Mary's look of surprise, she added: "I suppose I'm rude; but—well, some people say I'm rich enough to be rude."

"Will you come in, Mrs. Morton?"

"For a moment, yes. Something's wrong with the car. I had to leave it with the chauffeur at my washerwoman's. She said that a lace-mender lived here. I've some Brussels I'd like looked after. I suppose you do that sort of thing."

"I think I told you so the other day." Mary offered her the rocking-chair.

"How odd! I thought these old-fashioned sepulchers had gone out long ago." She drew a packet from her muff. "It's cold here. I'm glad I wore my furs."

Mary noticed that the kitchen door opened a little; she hoped that Madeline would come in. She hated to talk to Mrs. Morton. She found refuge in silence while she inspected the lace flounce.

"Dear, dear!" Mrs. Morton said. "I've seen your younger sister. My son's having a little flirtation with her just now. You're a little like her. It was the girl behind the candy counter at the railway station last year."

Mary remembered some of the speeches that

had been made against the girl, and, flushing, laid down the lace on another chair.

"I wish," she said, looking squarely at the visitor, "that you would ask your son *not* to speak to my sister."

"Indeed!" Mrs. Morton smiled. "I am to be a messenger, am I? You had better keep your brazen sister from my son. I don't object to his amusing himself when he has nothing to do. And at his age girls of his own class don't attract him."

Mary's heart seemed to stand still. She could not have said whether it was anguish or anger that paralyzed her tongue.

"Poor creature!" thought Madeline, at the other side of the door. "After all she has suffered of late! But I'll give the old dame a little rope before I interfere."

"If my son has a vulgar taste, I can't help it. If your sister doesn't throw herself at his head, he won't follow her."

"She is only a child," Mary said—"only a child!"

"Take care of her, then. My boy wouldn't listen to dictation from *me*. I suppose you want to extract money from his father, and this is the first move." Mrs. Morton laughed softly. "Oh, we know you."

Mary sat still, cold, horrified; and the woman spoke of Amy—little Amy!

"I consider this subject closed," continued Mrs. Morton. "You can mend this lace, and I will pay a reasonable price. As to your sister, she can, no doubt, take care of herself."

She rose from the chair, haughtily.

The door opened; in came a very elegant figure, languidly, gracefully.

"What old type did I hear talking with the voice of a peacock?" asked the elegant creature, in mellifluously-sounding French.

Madeline's soft, trailing gown of black and chiffon, with just a spangle here and there, "draped" in the latest fashion, caught Mrs. Morton's attention and respect. One thing she understood thoroughly—clothes. She recognized that the languid, calm, distinguished person was perfectly dressed.

"A customer?" she asked. People in Orvisville were curious.

"No; a friend," said Madeline. "O Mary, do let me open a window! I really believe this creature smells of musk."

Mrs. Morton's pale face contracted, but she held her ground. Madeline glided to the window and open it wide. Mrs. Morton tightened her lips. Musk! What an insult! And yet she was for the moment overawed. The style of the newcomer was overpowering. Mrs. Morton, whose French had been painfully acquired, was impressed. She always overrated anything that she knew to be difficult of attainment for her. It is to be feared that Madeline had, in some way, acquired a knowledge of her weaknesses. There were few secrets in Orvisville.

"Who is this provincial person, *ma chère Marie,* that is frightening thee?" demanded Madeline, in very distinct French. "She is a fashion-plate of 1870. Pardon, Madame! Do

you speak French? It is the language of my fathers."

Mrs. Morton stood near her chair, irresolute. This elegant creature probably intended to insult her; but she could scarcely believe that. It was evident the visitor did not know who she was.

"Chère Marie," whispered Madeline, "let me deal with her. *C'est mon affaire!* It will do me good, and I will speak French. I can always be a lady in French, but not in English."

Perturbed as she was, Mary remembered Mrs. Trevanion's somewhat similar announcement.

"I am Mrs. Wadsworth Morton."

"Ah—a! Shall I fall dead? You are a *grand dame* of yesterday. *Vous méprisez ceux qui mangent le pain dur!* Is it not so? Ugh!"

Madeline stepped forward, and put her hand on the knob of the door.

"Ugh!" she repeated. "When I think of what you said to my friend here, I can no longer be a lady and speak as the good nuns taught me. You are surprised! No, I will speak plain English to you. What have you been blathering about, with me listening until I could hardly keep my hands off you? *She,* who is good, but who must eat the hard bread of the poor, asks you to keep an eye on that worthless loafer—half omadhaun that he is—of a son of yours, and you dare to insult her! Yes, daguerreotype of a boiled witch, you insult her! What have you but your money? You are not clever nor good nor kind, and the devil would never fly away with you for your beauty! You are rude because you are rich!"

Mrs. Morton made a movement toward the door.

"No; I shall finish!"

"Cat!" remarked Mrs. Morton.

"I should never call you a kitten!" returned Madeline, with a peculiarly exasperating laugh. "And your son—he is a sneak, and I have no doubt your husband knows much of the class who blackmail."

Mrs. Morton's face crimsoned—there had been rumors.

"You are of the rich people who make the poor hate you. You, with your poison ivy hedge, and the innocent little children suffering because they pluck the leaves. Ugh! I would spit on you, if I were not a lady. Why do you not be humble and kind, as *le bon Dieu* intended the rich to be? Why do you not serve your neighbors as you ought, instead of pretending that you are better than they are, because of your tin cans—your millions of tin cans? I speak the truth in plain language, as my mother, the washerwoman, who loves her work, taught me to speak. Tell my mother that she sent you to a house of the gentle, where you have no place. Go, and take your packet!"

Mrs. Morton picked up her lace, as one dazed.

"So you are Madeline La Clare, the daughter of Bridget?"

Madeline made her lowest courtesy.

"Your mother shall pay for this!"

"No, *chère Madame!* My mother you can not touch. She has a sufficient bank account; she has worked hard, and I have helped her.

Money in bank is for the poor their greatest consolation—after religion. Now you may go, and tell your *vaurien* of a boy that he must keep away from nice girls, or somebody will shoot him."

With a set face and her head high in the air, Mrs. Morton left the house, not forgetting the packet.

Madeline laughed, and made a pirouette.

"I have had few luxuries in my life, and this is one. Don't cry, Mary! You can't help being a lady; I can—that's all. Now we will make some soup for the good mother, the foolish Amy, and the little ones. Later, I will tell you of my plan."

And Madeline went out to remove her finery. Mary was angry and ashamed, and yet she felt elated. She had at least one friend who was not afraid of extraordinary circumstances.

"No," said Madeline, who had partly guessed her thoughts. "I have never been afraid to live. In truth, I might have been bad because I did not fear the world; but the good Sisters have taught me that it is not for women to try to be as men."

CHAPTER XII

PRESENTLY there was another interruption to the making of the soup. A knock sounded at the door, and Mary admitted Mrs. Welterman.

"May I come in?" she asked gently. "I particularly wish to see you."

Madeline appeared abruptly, dressed in her own clothes.

"I'll be glad to talk to you, Mrs. Welterman," she said. "My friend here is very busy, and has already had several visitors this morning. I'm just a guest."

Mrs. Welterman laughed.

"No doubt. Monday visitors are a nuisance. I thought I'd call. I heard of her great——"

"Loss," said Madeline, shrewdly appraising the visitor. "Don't let us speak of it. There's no use in making people cry again. If you can't pray for the dead, it's just as well to be silent. Be seated, please! I think I recognized you. I saw you on the platform at the ratification of the nomination of Abe Charlemont for mayor."

"Yes, I was there. You don't look as if you approved of it."

"I didn't and I don't," said Madeline; "but I *did* approve of your dress. I'm with Crossing & Co., New York—used to be with Madame Elénore—and I know an elegant toilette when I see it. But I wondered why a woman who knew how to wear her clothes as well as you, should be there helping that rotten old Charlemont to

be mayor. If I had a vote, I'd soon settle *him!*"

Mrs. Welterman laughed. She was immensely flattered, as this astute Madeline meant that she should be.

"I am not in the habit of talking politics, though I am interested. You're Madeline La Clare, aren't you? I've heard of you."

"And all that Father Cook did for me?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am not ashamed of it."

"You have no reason to be—and less, if possible, of your gratitude to that good man."

"He *is* a good man," said Madeline reverently. "I wish there were many like him."

"He recommended me to come here. I want some new frocks."

Madeline eyed her, and glanced at Mary.

"The soup isn't ready!" she said. "It's getting late."

Mary took the hint and disappeared.

"Now tell me, really, Mrs. Welterman, why did you come? As to frocks, I can assure you that Mary Coyne has the real touch. But why did you come?"

Mrs. Welterman frowned. She was not in the habit of being catechised by people she regarded as her inferiors. Madeline met her eyes squarely; it was plain that this odd, half-French girl was not in the habit of acknowledging many people as her superiors.

"There's no use of your being *de haut en bas* with me," she said. "I have just told some bitter truths to your neighbor, Mrs. Morton, who came here with her impudence and her provincial airs.

But you're different. We speak the same language. You may be insolent, but you can't be vulgar like this Morton woman."

Mrs. Welterman tried hard to look haughty.

"I came, not to pry into Miss Coyne's private affairs——"

"I'm glad of that. People seem to think that they have a right to drop into poor people's houses when they please. 'Does your husband booze?' " (Madeline's accent was exquisitely elegant.) " 'Do you have meat more than three times a week? Is that a bottle baby?' I've heard them! Suppose I asked Mrs. Morton if *her* husband boozed! She'd tell a lie and say, 'No.' "

Mrs. Welterman was frankly amused.

"The truth is that I wanted something to do, and Father Cook said I had better go and try discreetly to help the Coynes. A certain Mr. March——"

"Arthur March is a busybody. Well, you can help them. But I own I was prejudiced when I saw you and the other ladies on the stage with that sweater and bloodsucker, Abe Charlemont. Why, he's making us all Socialists!"

"I noticed that Peter Carlin," returned Mrs. Welterman, "your foremost Roman Catholic, supports him."

"He's doing the work of the Evil One!" exclaimed Madeline excitedly. "It's Catholics like Peter Carlin—sweaters themselves, sitting in the front pews—that will help to turn thoughtless people against religion. They're making Socialists."

"That may be. I have never thought much

about Mr. Charlemont except as an acquaintance of my husband; but I'll ask my son Isaac about it. He's half a Socialist already," she added with a laugh.

"You and the like of you will be the means of electing a Socialist mayor in Orvisville, Mrs. Welterman. You're driving people to it. Look at the poor negroes, hoarded up in the narrow streets near the lots, where all the waste is dumped! The mayor can't change conditions, because it would be an expense to the Can King to clean up things. And everybody knows that Abe Charlemont has a big interest in the suit factory that sweats these poor Polish and Russian Jews—men, women, and children. Look at the crowded tenements in this town, rented for all sorts of money by Pete Carlin—in sight of the green fields, too. If I were a man—*O mon Dieu,* if I were a man!"

Madeline's eyes flashed; she stood with her arms akimbo, a threatening Fury. Presently she continued:

"It's a hard thing to be a Christian sometimes —you want to kill—to kill these bloodsuckers! But *you* don't care. Charlemont is a Jew like your husband! Peter Carlin makes people so sick in his plague-spots, that they'll take any wages your husband gives them. Why should you care?"

"But I do care!" Mrs. Welterman had been watching with the deepest interest the change in Madeline's face. "Why do you care?"

"God makes me care," said Madeline simply. "I don't suffer. I can earn my living anywhere

and any time, because I've got talent and energy. Your Can King couldn't browbeat me. I do not have to work for sweaters, and my dear old mother has saved enough to frighten the wolf from the door any time. I can afford to defy you all. But, oh, Mrs. Welterman," Madeline began to cry, "when I see the little children living in pigsties, their fathers driven to drink and made brutes of by the hard, hopeless, daily toil, and the horrible corruption of the town——"

"I have never thought much about it," Mrs. Welterman said.

"If you *had,* you'd never have been seen on the platform, as one of the Civic League, praising Charlemont, and with Pete Carlin! There must be a way out. And these people will turn to the *drapeau rouge* and *ni Dieu, ni Maître,* if you don't do something. Charlemont is worse than Spracht."

"What can we do?"

"Ask Father Cook."

Mrs. Welterman shrugged her shoulders.

"Not for advice that my husband might not approve of. He might tell me that our riches are not our own."

"He would—he would tell you that something of what you have ought to be returned to the poor."

"Nonsense! That's Socialism."

"Socialism has borrowed all its best things from the Church of which Father Cook is a priest."

"Who taught you this; for a——"

"For the daughter of a *blanchisseuse de fin,* I speak well, you think!" continued Madeline

proudly. "But my English isn't always so good. I speak the language of the streets, in English; but in French I am elegant. I taught Mrs. Morton *that.*"

"I should like to have been here. That reminds me—I came to find out what I could do for this family."

"But first," said Madeline earnestly, "I must repeat that, if you good people stick to Abe Charlemont and Pete Carlin you will have a Socialist mayor, and one that will make *you* sweat."

"I'll talk to my son about that. But what can I do for the Coynes?"

"Much! You can spend some money for them."

Mrs. Welterman was silent.

"Wait! I will return in a moment. Mrs. Coyne is in the kitchen—I hear her. I will tell her that you are here, and she will not come in."

Mrs. Coyne had returned, with a sparsely filled market-basket. She complained bitterly of the high prices of living.

"Why, when I was a girl, pigs' feet could be had for nothing, and now—what is it, Madeline?"

"I want to try on Mrs. Jensen's dress again. I think I have a new customer for Mary."

Mary surrendered the gown, smiling; for she had great confidence in Madeline.

Mrs. Welterman was amazed at the apparition that emerged from the kitchen.

"I enter the room, as Mère Angelique, who was a high aristocrat in Brittany, entered it. None of your ladies on The Hills can do it that way.

Mère Angelique was *une élégante,* though she herself would sometimes wash the clothes of the poor. Mary Coyne made this frock. She has great talent. You see, I wear it perfectly. You would surely buy it if you saw it worn like this."

"I must say I would! That draping is perfect, and *le dernier cri.*"

"Ah, well! I have learned business in Montreal. I can sell. I have learned at Madame Elénore's and at Crossing's, how to talk to ladies. I want to get Amy Coyne something to do away from this town—*voilà!* You will give the money; I will be 'Mademoiselle Madeline—Modes,' in letters of gold, and Mary Coyne will make the dresses."

"Money? I don't think——"

"It will be business: you will have percentage."

"But this is not what I expected," said Mrs. Welterman, hesitating. "That is not *giving.*"

"Well," answered Madeline, trailing her robe, gracefully, before Mrs. Welterman, "you will only give alms: you will not really help."

"Oh, yes, I will! And I can have a good dressmaker as well!"

"Mais oui!"

Mrs. Welterman laughed again; her eyes glowed, and her teeth showed when she laughed.

"You are amazing. One forgets that——"

"I'm a washerwoman's daughter?"

"Well, yes."

"It is that which makes me what I am, and I thank the good God for the pure blood in my veins."

Mrs. Welterman was silent. It was certain

that this washerwoman's daughter was a personage, and that she was influenced by her.

" 'Mademoiselle Madeline—Modes, in letters of gold,' you will arrange the details as soon as possible? Will Mary Coyne consent?"

"With all her heart!"

"I quite understand why you want the younger sister away. The tone of this place, I suppose, is very much like all factory towns; and I wish something could be done to improve matters."

Madeline's face became grave.

"I have told you, Mrs. Welterman, that you can't change things until you change the surroundings. It doesn't suit Abe Charlemont and Pete Carlin to have the hovels where the poor live torn down and better buildings put up. Look at Law's Alley! You ought to know that half the disease of the town comes from that reeking place. The black cooks and maids who live there bring disease into the houses where they serve, because disease breeds in their dwellings. It is these things that make people hate you rich who support avaricious politicians. Every child that is poisoned by Mr. Morton's hedge makes a dozen enemies for him; and when diphtheria creeps out in Law's Alley—well, you know what makes Socialists. Help? You can't help, because your husband is not strong enough to defy Abe Charlemont and the rest. I doubt whether even Father Cook, as good as he is, would dare to do it."

Mrs. Welterman was about to reply sharply, but the words died on her lips. Was her husband strong enough to defy Abe Charlemont?

"And so you think the Socialists will put up Spracht against Mr. Charlemont?"

"No; they are not so foolish as that. But they will put up a man of good reputation, whom people can trust, whose word carries weight, and who will have a following among those who hate the rich because they are rich, and from those who will not stand the present horrors, which are growing worse."

"Good-by!" said Mrs. Welterman abruptly. "You have made me think."

They parted as equals. As she drew down her veil, Mrs. Welterman thought:

"A wonderful creature—wonderful because she is so sincere. I think I have found some work to do."

CHAPTER XIII

MADELINE did not let Mrs. Welterman rest until she consented to all the details of the plan she had outlined. Mrs. Welterman was at heart a woman of business, and she soon discovered that the plan could be made a profitable one. A suitable place was found in a New York by-street. Madeline marked with an eagle eye such young persons as would make good assistants for Mary; and the sign, "Mademoiselle Madeline, Couturière" (she had finally rejected "Modes" as being old-fashioned) was almost painted—when two obstacles arose. Mrs. Coyne would not give her consent to Amy's leaving school, and Amy objected to missing the graduating ceremonies.

"I do not object to work," she said—"I know I'll have to work. But I'm having a good time here. I don't want to spend *all* my time in New York—a visit now and then is enough for me—and I *must* graduate."

"And I hope to live to see Amy in her graduating dress!" wailed Mrs. Coyne. "If your father had lived, it would have been the happiest day of his life. And the poor child must stop her education in the very middle of it!"

"And the other girls will graduate, and I won't be there; and Jack Morton and all my friends have promised me bouquets," echoed Amy.

"But," said Mary, feeling like a tyrant, "Mrs.

Welterman offers a great opportunity. She pays all the expenses of establishing the shop; I draw fifteen dollars a week, and you five; and Madeline and I take all the profit at the end of the year, except Mrs. Welterman's reasonable share. Madeline has arranged it all."

"Oh, Madeline!" said Mrs. Coyne scornfully. "She is only a washerwoman's daughter, and not a fit companion for my girls."

"She's a splendid character, mother," observed Mary.

"I can't help that," said Mrs. Coyne fretfully; "but I *can* help listening to her slangy talk by keeping away from her. Mary, I forbid you to take Amy into the company of that girl!"

"You see!" Amy settled down triumphantly to write her Thursday night's composition on "Pericles."

Mary was perplexed. She began the siege again, with little hope of success.

"Amy would have new and practical interests, mother; she would begin to prepare herself for life; soon she would earn her own living and be independent of me."

Mrs. Coyne tightened her lips.

"And a daughter of mine reminds me, too, that I am dependent on her. Oh, shame!"

"Don't mind her, mother." Amy patted her mother on the shoulder. "You can always count on me."

Mary folded her hands—it was all she could do. After all, she would be home from New York at nights and on Sundays, but she was determined not to give in without a struggle.

"Amy must begin to earn her living sometime, mother."

"I am poor, Mary," Mrs. Coyne replied; "but I will not sacrifice the education of my child."

"Well, then, we shall have to pay Amy's money to somebody else for a while, but only for a while.—I wish you'd try on Mrs. Jensen's dress, Amy. She is delighted with it, but she wants a little change made."

Amy jumped up with alacrity.

"Very well!"

The dress was very becoming to Amy.

"How tall the girl has grown!" cried her mother. "And, Amy dear, I must say you are positively beautiful in that dress!"

Amy, flushed and pleased, tried to see as much of herself as possible in the small mirror.

"I see where the trouble is," said Mary. "Mrs. Jensen is not so well proportioned as—I mean," continued the sister, remembering Amy's incorrigible vanity, "that she is really smaller than you."

"It just fits me," Amy said. "Oh, I wish I could have a dress like that! But I'd have it low neck and short sleeves."

"You never will, unless you care to work for it!"

Mary was holding a lamp over Amy's head. The gas jet in the parlor was in full blast. The bell rang; Amy, blushing from a gratified vanity (Mary had involuntarily complimented her), opened the door. In a motoring cap and long overcoat, Jack Morton stood in the doorway.

"Oh, it's you!" he said, as if dazzled. "You're

a beauty, Amy—a real swell one." And then, seeing Mrs. Coyne and Mary, he added: "My mother left a handkerchief here this morning, and I came to get it. Sorry to trouble you."

"It is not here," answered Mary coldly.

He stood still, looking at Amy, his eyes full of admiration.

"If you don't object, Mrs. Coyne, I'd like to take this young lady of yours for a little joy drive."

Mrs. Coyne smiled happily, and opened her mouth.

"Thank you!" said Mary, speaking before her mother could utter a word. "There is no handkerchief here." And she closed the door.

Amy burst into tears, and Mrs. Coyne put her arms around her.

"You had better stand straight while I change this drapery. You can have my handkerchief and cry comfortably while I'm doing it."

"Poor child!" exclaimed Mrs. Coyne, her voice becoming pathetic. "I had no idea, Mary, that you could be so cruel. Is Amy to have no chances? The idea of treating a nice boy that way! He is only a boy."

"He is twenty-three years of age at least, and he is quite old enough to drink too much whiskey, everybody says. If you knew more of the world, mother, you would not encourage this sort of thing. Amy has her studies; she ought to have her work—then she would have no time for dangerous amusements."

Amy dried her eyes, and pulled herself away

from her sister, who was kneeling before her, arranging the drapery.

"Mr. Spracht says you're a Puritan, and that you'll never be really pretty or gay, because you seem to be always thinking of your soul."

Mary jumped to her feet, pale and terrified.

"Where did Mr. Spracht speak to you?"

Amy looked abashed.

"Why should I tell you everything? You're not father or mother. The other night Jack and another boy gave me and Sadie Jensen some oysters in the hotel restaurant; and Mr. Spracht, who is polite, if he isn't pretty, came over and spoke to us. He told us how pleasant life was for nice young girls in New York, and some stories about actresses and chorus ladies—you needn't look so *awful,* Mary!"

"Mary is angry," said Mrs. Coyne, "because she knows that liquor is served at the hotel; but I'm sure you didn't take any."

"Why, of course not!" replied Amy, decisively.

"And if Sadie Jensen, a clergyman's daughter, is allowed to have refreshments at a respectable hotel—the Woodland Arms is certainly respectful—we can't be too hard on Amy, can we?"

Mary stood still, white and silent.

"You won't go again, will you, Amy, since your sister is so set against it?" wailed Mrs. Coyne.

"I'll not promise. I'd like to know what Mary has against Mr. Spracht. His name is always in the papers. I don't see why he isn't good enough to speak to me," protested Amy. "Jack Morton

says he is a very clever man, though he is a Socialist."

"He's everything that's bad; and if you speak to him again——"

Mary stopped. She recognized—and a dull pain ran through her heart—how futile was any threat she could make.

"If you want to know what Spracht is, mother, ask Madeline La Clare or the Catholic priest."

"George Trevanion seemed to be very friendly with him the other night; he'll not say anything against Mr. Spracht," said Amy.

"George Trevanion probably does not know his character," Mary answered, red spots showing in her cheeks. "You must not speak to him again, Amy!"

"Amy, I can not have quarrels like this," said Mrs. Coyne. "They never happened when your father was alive."

"It's Mary's fault."

"If you can't get on better together, well have to go out to Oregon. Your uncle, Amos Coyne, wrote to me the other day, offering me and the younger children a home. He was a Mormon once, and your father didn't approve of him; but after his wives died he moved to Oregon and became quite respectable, though I heard he gambled; but that was more respectable than having two wives. He's a widower now, with a large house. He raises apples; and if Mary insists on leaving us, to work in New York with Madeline La Clare, we'll have to leave here. Then there'll be nobody to quarrel with. But it

is hard to be driven out of house and home at my age."

Mary made no reply. What could she do or say? She moved slowly across the room; then she went upstairs, and kissed both her little brothers, who were asleep. Even they might easily forget her!

Her own room seemed cold and desolate, with the clear moonlight streaming on the white counterpane of the enamelled iron bedstead. She pulled down the blinds of the dormer window, and opened a box made of black oak, given to her by Trevanion. There were his letters—not many—tied in a neat little parcel, some old silver and copper coins, a daguerreotype of her father in his youth, a coral necklace, and, unexpectedly, she came across a small revolver. Her father had told her to give it to George Trevanion. One day, just before his death, he had amused himself by engraving on it Trevanion's name and the date. It had been kept loaded during her father's illness, because of Mrs. Coyne's fear of burglars. She could not have used a revolver to save her life, "but a loaded pistol in the house makes one feel so secure!"

"Give it to Trevanion," her father had said, "and let him unload it for you. Don't try to do it yourself."

But she had forgotten to do this. She must send it to him.

Mary had never felt so lonely and depressed in her life. The mother, whom she loved more as a mother loves a child than as a child loves a mother, had failed her; she was sure that Amy

was rushing to destruction, and her mother had deliberately planned to leave her and take the boys. For this she had given up the hope of happiness! She saw a dull, lead-colored path stretching before her until death. Trevanion was lost to her—not because of her sacrifice, but because he had begun to forget her. With acute bitterness she recalled his flattered look when Miss Morton had complimented him. Life was too much for her to bear. She recalled her father's saying that the Yoke of Christ was light, but this had no consolation for her now. She said to herself that the cold moonlight on the counterpane was no colder than her heart. Pray? She could not pray. To whom was she to pray? If the words of the "Our Father" were not the words of the Lord, if the words of the Bible were not the infallible words of Christ, there was no hope for her in the next world. She recalled, with anguish, the words of Dr. Wortley's sermon. For the person of the Lord Christ she had always had a deep devotion; it had made and kept her heart bright. There was a God still—even Trevanion admitted that—and yet she was not sure. If He were just and good, He would not have deserted her, just as she most needed Him.

The glittering pistol and the few trinkets in her box lay before her in the clear light. And, then a curious, bitter, foolish thought occurred to her. Fine clothes would count even with Trevanion. Mrs. Jensen's dress had counted with both those women—and with that hateful Jack Morton. And she saw again Trevanion's admiring look as Molly Morton spoke to him. Yes!—

fine clothes and riches! She undressed, raised the window (the spring of which was broken), and supported it with the slender piece of rattan that lay on the sill for the purpose. She cocked the revolver and put it under the sash, pointing as nearly as possible at the place where her forehead would be. A blast of wind, and the sash would fall, as it often did at night—a blast of wind, and she might not even hear the report of the explosion that would kill her. There was no hope for her: she might as well die. Nobody in this world wanted her, and there was no love in the next. She slept. Late in the night, a pistol shot half aroused her. It seemed far off.

CHAPTER XIV

MADELINE'S energy had lit a flame in Orvisville, that began to show itself by signs of smoke. Mrs. Welterman called on Father Cook. Father Waldron, the assistant, was in the parlor when she arrived. He was a tall, thin young man, with a clear-cut profile, and a somewhat impassive look. He bowed rather coldly to the lady, who, coming from an afternoon tea at the Mortons', was in purple velvet and ermine. Ladies bored Father Waldron, whereas he liked old women like Bridget La Clare, and would listen to them by the half hour. Except with his very few friends, he was a silent person. Mrs. Welterman noticed that he was well shaved—Father Cook had not set him the example of careful "grooming."

"I've just dropped in to say that I had a talk about the Coynes with Madeline La Clare, and I think we've settled something. But, Father Cook, do you know that you and I and my husband have been encouraging Socialism, that we're responsible for it? Could you believe it, Father Waldron—of me?"

"Yes," said the young priest, in a cold, even voice, "I do believe it!"

"You're not very polite, young man. Take a chair, please, Mrs. Welterman," Father Cook said genially. "Not that one—something's the matter with the back of it. I'm quite at your service."

"But why do you believe it of me, Father Waldron?" asked Mrs. Welterman, with just a touch of coquetry. "Why?"

Father Waldron hesitated.

"Speak up, my boy!" exhorted Father Cook, his eyes twinkling.

"What do you say to my programme for the St. Cecilians next Thursday week, Father?" asked the young priest, with a determination to avoid all questions. "I shall send it at once to the printer's if you approve."

"Come now, answer Mrs. Welterman's question."

"Frankly, then," said Father Waldron, looking out of his cold gray-blue eyes at Mrs. Welterman, "I think if a woman goes about in ermine and velvet, with liveried servants and a dazzling motor car, in a town like this, where after each strike the people are poorer and poorer, it is a direct incentive to the worst kind of Socialism."

Mrs. Welterman looked at him angrily.

"I did not expect to he insulted," she said. "Well" (she broke into an irritable laugh), "I suppose I brought it on myself. But, without beginning an argument, don't you think, Father Waldron, that a woman in my position is entitled to ordinary luxuries?"

"There may be occasions when it is quite proper to display such luxuries. Persons of heart and taste do, I think, regard dress as a symbol. If it is not a symbol, it is merely a matter of ostentation. Ermine and diamonds have their place on certain occasions—to do honor to—well a great person—and in the proper surroundings.

I was brought up in a small foreign way; but I knew great ladies who, as a rule, dressed very simply (though they were magnificent enough at times), because the splendor they could afford was not always suitable."

"Father Waldron's mother was a German, and maid of honor to one of the grand duchesses, and he has foreign ideas. But how have *I* encouraged Socialism?" asked Father Cook.

"My own husband would not have dared to accuse me of vulgarity in that way!" exclaimed Mrs. Welterman. "I don't think that you are a good mentor for Ikey, whose manners certainly are——"

"I should be very glad if you would give me the manuscript of the programme," Father Waldron said, again bowing slightly to Mrs. Welterman.

"Wait a moment! There's no hurry." The twinkle in Father Cook's eyes was apparent. "I hope you don't think that I encourage Socialism."

"Must I really answer that?" Father Waldron looked at his chief quite directly.

"Of course."

"Well," said Father Waldron, "I can only quote Sandy McGill, who came in for his wages this morning——"

"Sandy McGill is a Scot, a little cracked, I think, and mad with hatred against Spracht," Father Cook interjected. "It seems that Sandy was to be married to one of the factory girls, but he says that Spracht broke the match in some nasty way. Sandy gave up regular work and now does odd jobs about our house and garden.

I just wanted to explain.—Go on, Father Waldron!"

"Sandy told me this morning that the Socialists think of putting a candidate for mayor into the field against the ring; and that a lot of good men were joining the Socialists, because the Socialists are bent on having an honest government, and on turning out Charlemont and Carlin, and" (he glanced at Mrs. Welterman) "on teaching a lesson to others whose interests are served by corruption in politics."

"Don't mind *me,*" said Mrs. Welterman, smoothing down her long ermine stole. "That, I suppose, is a veiled allusion to Mr. Welterman?"

"I am only quoting Sandy, but I must say that I agree with him. He is angry because he is afraid that the Left wing of the Socialists here will run Spracht as a candidate. Spracht represents neither God nor a master. He is an extreme Syndicalist."

"A what?" asked Mrs. Welterman, forgetting her pose of indifference.

"He doesn't believe in bringing about the Socialist millennium by votes or legislation. He wants to destroy by fair means or foul. Foul means have no terrors for him," explained Father Cook. "He is the most dangerous man in the community."

"I think that Charlemont and Carlin are just as bad," said Father Waldron. "Will you give me the programme, Father?"

"Wait!" Father Cook frowned. "Charlemont frequently gives us rather generous donations,

and Mr. Carlin's wife and daughters are devout Catholics."

Father Waldron's eyes blazed for a moment.

"If I did not respect you, both as my superior and as a man, Father Cook, I should say that I am weary of an argument that is largely responsible for the growth of the worst kind of Socialism. Charlemont is notoriously the tool of the greedy people, who exploit the poor. Pete Carlin's family are living on the wages of sin, though I don't suppose they realize it."

"Good Heavens!" said Father Cook. "This *is* strong language."

"It's the truth."

The bell rang. Father Cook, always accustomed to wait on himself, opened the door. A young man, in a rough coat, hat in hand, stood on the threshold. He was of the middle height; his eyes were black and glowing; his hair, quite as black, clung in close curls to his head. The complexion was the clear red that always made people think of the hygienic laws of the Jews, when they noticed it. His nose was rather large and very aquiline. He had an air of mingled melancholy and alertness. He carried under his arm a pile of books.

"Oh, mother!" he said in a soft voice. "You here! It's a good place to come. I didn't know that you were so well acquainted with Father Cook."

"I don't know him so well, but that impertinent young Howard girl calls him 'the pervasive Father Cook——'"

Father Cook smiled.

"And you simply can't get rid of him."

Father Waldron's face brightened.

"Hello, Ikey!" he said.

"I've interrupted a talk," said Ikey, putting his books down on the unsafe chair, and shaking some raindrops from his hat.

"No; a lecture. Father Waldron has the floor."

"I am answering a question or two," Father Waldron said, averting his eyes from Mrs. Welterman, whom he unjustly regarded as a worthless, if brilliant, butterfly of fashion. "Now that you've come, Ikey, I'll wrest my programme from Father Cook, and leave you to explain why most honest men in Orvisville would be tempted to vote for the unspeakable Spracht rather than for the unspeakable Charlemont, with Pete Carlin holding the lot."

"You're going too far," said Father Cook.

"I'm going just as far as the printer's with my programme," answered Father Waldron, leaving the room with his manuscript.

"Charlemont!" said Isaac Welterman, with bitterness. "He is the man that will not let us clean out that horrible Russian Jew settlement. I have told father that a dozen times. The truth is that, if you good people go on as you are doing, honest men will be driven to support the Socialists, to get rid of the professional politicians like Pete Carlin. We all know that he will do anything to add to the profits of the people that employ him."

"Isaac!"

"I'm not saying that father employs him, but

I suspect that he does. You see, mother, Charlemont and his crowd are out for the money. They grab all they can get, and they are practical politicians. He and Pete Carlin are born leaders, but born leaders are not always good men; a little historical reading will teach anybody that. It's real education that counts in the fight between these exploiters of the poor and the people who are their victims. It's not being in the right: it's capacity that counts. Now, Charlemont and his crowd have capacity. Spracht and his mob have capacity, too. Men who believe, like myself, have education and right on their side. But they haven't the practical capacity to lead."

"You don't mean to say that you'd go against your father, if you had this capacity?" demanded Mrs. Welterman.

"Now, mother, you know perfectly well that I'm not bound to vote the same political ticket as my father. In fact, I'm thinking of shocking papa by becoming a Catholic."

"Isaac!" cried Mrs. Welterman, raising her hands in horror.

Father Cook looked uneasily at her; he expected an outburst of protests, but Mrs. Welterman was too well-bred for that.

"You see, mother, I had to make my thesis for the Department of Comparative Religion in some line of philosophical research that was new. Nobody in the history of our University had done anything on what the Catholics call Indulgences, so I came to Father Cook and Father Waldron for books. I don't think——"

"I don't think, you mean to say, that anybody

can accuse Father Cook of having unduly influenced you. I know your obstinacy," said his mother.

"But, mother," said Isaac, sitting down on the pile of books, "why should you or papa object?"

"A Jew turned Christian! It will break your grandfather's heart."

"I shall not tell him. He himself has said that sometimes he was not sure but what Christ was the Messias. Besides, why do you and papa call yourselves Jews? You don't keep the Sabbath. You care as much about the regulations of Moses as you care about the Talmud. The Thorah is not very heavy upon you. No decent Christian can be logical who despises the creed of the Jews——"

"True!" said Father Cook emphatically.

"The Christian religion is just a fulfilment, that's all; and as you didn't give me any fixed religion, I have concluded to choose one."

"Oh dear, dear!" moaned Mrs. Welterman. "Only the other day I was unhappy because bridge and parties did not satisfy me! And here I am suddenly thrust into a *milieu,* where Socialism and religion and all sorts of mind-racking things are the subjects of ordinary conversation!"

"It is a difficult time, mother. I suppose the Court ladies of the French Revolution, who laughed over Voltaire's 'Pucelle' and the 'Marriage of Figaro,' thought like you."

Mrs. Welterman raised her hands imploringly.

"Don't quote from your thesis. I'm not learned."

Isaac laughed.

"Molly Morton and I were talking about the blindness of people yesterday. She says that the *soi-disant* aristocracy in this country are going to have a shock soon. She is wild to see that George Trevanion mayor of Orvisville. She heard him speak the other night. She is very clever and advanced."

"Little Molly Morton!" exclaimed Mrs. Welterman, with scorn.

"Oh, you may say that! But girls have changed since your time, mother."

"I should think so!"

"Molly reads everything, and she can beat her father in a political argument any time."

Mrs. Welterman's lips curled. She had not a very high opinion of Mr. Morton's mental powers.

"Reads everything!" Father Cook said. "I am sorry, very sorry, to hear that. She looks like a nice girl."

"She's independent. I can't say that I like that type, though she is a good friend of mine," remarked Isaac.

"Thank Heaven, you can't marry her! She's a Gentile," breathed his mother, gratefully.

"Why not, mother—if she asked me? She says she has a right to choose her own husband. I shouldn't refuse because she is a Gentile."

There was an interruption. Arthur March entered and stood still in the doorway that led to the stairs.

"I beg pardon!" he said, reddening a little, "I ran in through the garden and up to Father Waldron's room. Is he here?"

"Gone to the printer's. Come in, Arthur."

"Only a minute, Father. I must go back to the shop."

"Don't you think you might offer us a cup of tea, Father?" asked Mrs. Welterman. "I'm weak after all this brain work. Don't trouble—I've already met Mr. March, in the bookstore; he helped me to choose a box of books for my niece in Indiana."

"I remember," Arthur replied agreeably. "And you wouldn't have anything of Mark Twain's except 'Joan of Arc.' It was so unusual. —By the way, Father Cook, we've concluded to nominate George Trevanion as mayor—to cut out Spracht."

Father Cook frowned.

"Against Charlemont and Pete Carlin? They're very good to our people."

"They're very bad *for* our people," said March. "I don't want to be disrespectful, Father, but their power ought to be broken; and, rather than have Spracht run on a Socialist ticket, we're promising our support to Trevanion."

"So, you're going to talk more!" exclaimed Mrs. Welterman. "*Do* let us have tea!"

"March," said Father Cook, "I don't at all approve of your action—but, if you don't mind, go into the kitchen and get what tea things you can. My housekeeper is out, which is a mercy to me, as she doesn't approve of tea at this hour. You'll find the cups rather thick, ma'am. There's always boiling water, so do the best you can."

March obeyed. In the meantime Isaac made

himself more comfortable, and Mrs. Welterman waited with a patient air.

Father Cook frowned again.

"I don't like this. Charlemont and Carlin are practical politicians. I don't pretend that they're idealists." Father Cook pushed his biretta back on his head, which action showed that he was uneasy. "I've never yet asked Charlemont or Pete Carlin to get a place for a poor man and met with a refusal. We ought to be grateful to such men."

"Grateful?" asked Isaac. "Why grateful? If I do my work well for pay, I shouldn't be grateful to the man that paid me. He ought to be grateful to me if I fulfilled his expectations."

"Isaac! Isaac!" implored Mrs. Welterman. She was secretly delighted to hear her rather dull "Ikey" answering back. "He's like my family, after all," she said to herself.

"That's a new doctrine," observed Father Cook.

"Besides, Father, when Charlemont, who winks at Spracht's corrupt practices, finds a place for people in a factory, you never know whether they are being 'sweated' or not. You never know whether they have to work in unventilated rooms or not. Look at the case of the girl that was engaged to marry Sandy McGill! Spracht, after he had separated her from Sandy, found a place in the suit factory for her, and you know what happened. The cutting machine wasn't guarded, and she was killed."

"God help us!" said the priest.

"You ought to know, too, that the wages paid

to some of the women and men are horribly low, and that the school laws are evaded—Charlemont again! Pete Carlin owns the present mayor—we all know that; but the mayor did make a fight against the paying of less than a dollar and half a day to some of the inarticulate foreign workingmen, who had to support six or seven children—and making them work overtime, consequently. Charlemont will run for the mayoralty himself. There is no use speaking to my father about it; he raves about 'practical politics' too. He knows that Spracht, while he talks about having neither God nor master, has Charlemont for a boss."

"Why, Ikey! How you *do* talk!" exclaimed Mrs. Welterman, her beautiful eyes glowing.

"I don't like to be called 'Ikey,' " said Isaac, suddenly descending to earth.

"I begin to believe that what you say—is—partly true," said Father Cook reluctantly, "but I don't believe that Charlemont and Spracht work together."

"That's because you're not really a practical politician," said Isaac promptly.

Father Cook pushed his biretta back farther. If Isaac Welterman had called him a Modernist, he could not have been more offended.

At this moment March entered, with a large lacquer tray. Isaac made room for it on the table. Mrs. Welterman took off her gloves, preparing to serve the tea, exclaiming at the thickness of the bread.

"I don't see how you priests get on without feminine assistance," said Mrs. Welterman, the scent of the tea restoring her confidence.

"There are compensations," remarked Father Cook dryly. "I was brought up in a Maryland town by three aunts and several ladies-in-law."

March laughed. Isaac drank his tea in silence.

"When I left to execute this job with neatness and dispatch," said March, who seemed to have forgotten the shop, "you were saying that you did not approve of me."

"Do you think that Charlemont winks at Spracht's practices, such as his trying to lure one of my parishioners to New York?" asked Father Cook, drinking hot water, and looking anxiously at March.

"Trevanion has proof of it. He and Spracht, though they belong to the same organization—the Bebel Centrum—have had a tremendous quarrel over some evidence I unearthed. But we can't very well talk of the matter—before a lady."

Father Cook frowned until two deep cuts came into his forehead.

March went on:

"I shall try to influence every Catholic I know to support Trevanion against Charlemont and Pete Carlin. Pete Carlin! Do you think that the workingmen are going to pay any attention to your eloquent sermons about what the Catholic Church has done for the slums and the poor, with Pete Carlin sitting in the front pew, and his wife and daughters brushing past them in ermine and purple? They know all that show represents the wages of sin. What does Sam Potocky or Ladislus Scherki, or Charlie Malone, with his four small children barefooted, and his daughter

of eighteen going to death of tuberculosis in the mill, care about the Thirteenth Century, when everything was so perfect? Since good Catholics will not do anything to change things, and since Pete Carlin represents them, I'm for Trevanion on a Socialist ticket. It is the lesser of the two evils."

There was a silence. Father Cook walked to the window and looked out at the dusk. He was perhaps over-scrupulous about the outward respect paid to his opinions; he had been a very benevolent tyrant for many years; but when he turned his face toward his guests—a very pale face—he said gently:

"Well, I must go. Thank you for coming, Mrs. Welterman! You will certainly not accuse me of forcing your son's opinions, will you—after this? Arthur, come in to-morrow evening and talk this matter over with Father Waldron and me—there's the telephone!"

CHAPTER XV

SOMEHOW, Mr. Wadsworth Morton was furious. The puree of lobster had been perfect at dinner; his wife was unusually agreeable; and Molly, in a white silk gown, with a pink fillet in her hair, charmed her father; Jack had not said an imprudent thing or uttered any obnoxious phrases of slang during the meal; but the master of the house was furious. He had read just before dinner a sarcastic leader in the *Gazette,* attacking George Trevanion as an "upstart," a "pretentious clerk," an "enemy of law and order."

"Who is this Trevanion?" he demanded, plunging his fork into a bit of sweetbread. "Does anybody know?"

"*I* know!" Molly smiled, with a superior air. "He is a most interesting young man, and he talks like a gentleman. Indeed, if I were sure he had a good ear for music, I'd marry him."

The father glared at her.

"You are going too far, Molly," said her mother. "You'll make your father angry. Where did you see this low person?"

"I can't make dad angrier than he is." Molly turned her very pretty pink and white face toward her father. "He is boiling already. Where did I see and hear Mr. Trevanion? At the Socialists' debate. I made Theckla take me, while you were at the Wetherills' dinner. I came home full of ideas."

"Oh, Molly! Molly!" wailed Mrs. Morton.

"And I sat next to Miss Coyne, whom you patronized so violently the other day."

"Was her sister with her?" asked Jack Morton, securing another choice bit of the *entrée* before the man took his plate. "She is a most beautiful girl."

"Theckla ought to be discharged, Wadsworth."

"No, dad. Theckla did just what I forced her to do. It was all quite harmless—talk and music; and it broadens one's mind. If you discharge Theckla I'll just go out and earn my own living. In spite of you, I have brought myself up to be self-supporting. I can play the fiddle well enough to get into an orchestra any time."

Mr. Morton almost smiled. He respected Molly. He knew very well that if she made up her mind to fulfil this threat he could not prevent her. She was bored by luxury, idleness, and society. The "advantages" he gave her she despised, except the one precious advantage of music.

"So you know this Trevanion?" he asked.

"I congratulated him on his speech," she said frankly. "Theckla told me that he had been engaged to Miss Coyne, but that it was broken off."

"You gossip with Theckla!" sighed Mrs. Morton, feebly waving away a piece of roast pheasant.

"You know very well, mother, that I wouldn't tolerate any maid if she wasn't a brilliant conversationalist."

Mrs. Morton seemed speechless. Mr. Morton laughed in spite of himself.

"Jack, I will not have you running about with that second Coyne girl," Mrs. Morton said, irritated by the laugh.

"Oh, let the boy amuse himself!" observed Mr. Morton. "You can't expect him to be a plaster saint. But, Molly, do you think that this Trevanion is worth reducing to ashes, or is he too stupid or ignorant to count?"

"If you ask me" (Molly smiled in her dazzling way) "I should say that he'll reduce your old Charlemont to ashes, if he decides to; and later, if you provoke him, your canning business as well."

"He is dangerous, then?" Mr. Morton really respected his daughter's opinions.

"I told you," she answered, with a gravity that threw her brother into a succession of chuckles, "I would marry him if I had time."

Mr. Morton nodded.

"Charlemont must be elected," he said. "We'll have to knock this upstart, Trevanion, out of the race. A poverty-stricken creature like him would have no chance for a nomination except for these leveling Socialists. I'll put Spracht up against him as a Left-Wing Socialist. All law and order will back up Charlemont against Spracht. Our new franchises depend on Charlemont's election."

"I'm for Trevanion!" said Molly. "I tell you, father," she went on seriously, "you'd better find out how you can help the people around us. It won't do to treat them like dogs. I'm ashamed" (she blushed red) "to look some of our neighbors in the face, because of the poison ivy hedge."

"Bah, Molly! We can't have a mob tearing through the grounds," said her father.

"Make them a regular thoroughfare!" chimed in Mrs. Morton.

"Some day," said Molly, "the mob will come."

Dinner was over.

"You're going out to play bridge, good parents! Well, I'll practice my Mozart, and Jack can turn the leaves for me."

"Not much!" he said.

A half hour later he was hastening through the grounds toward Orvisville, thinking of Amy Coyne. The glittering dress had completed the conquest of this volatile young man.

CHAPTER XVI

The night passed. Mary Coyne opened her eyes in the sunlight. Ah, the day was fine! She saw, with a shock of remembrance, the pistol on the window-sill. There had been a fierce wind in the night. The slender stick had not remained in its place, and there was a bullet embedded in the wall over her head. She pried it out with her scissors. Yes, she was alive and unwounded. It was not to be.

She shrank from the thought of the day before her. It would be a long, dreary day. She would stitch carefully at a dress for Mrs. Welterman. Ordinarily she would have felt an unusual interest in this work; for Mrs. Welterman recognized her talent. But on this bright, clear morning Mary had no interest in anything. She found herself wishing that the pistol had ended her wretched existence. Her mother was curious about the pistol-shot heard in the night. It had sounded near. Mary was silent.

At breakfast the boys were more boisterous than usual. Mary reprimanded Hubert for playfully crowning his hair with his saucer.

"Oh, let the child alone!" wailed Mrs. Coyne. "You ought to remember that he is a half orphan, and be more gentle with him. When he is with his kind uncle in Oregon you'll regret this, Mary."

Amy announced defiantly that she and Sadie Jensen were going "on a bicycle" with some

friends in the afternoon, and that she would need a nice lunch put up, as they were not coming back to supper.

"You can't go!" said Mary decidedly. "Your friends are Jack Morton and Herman Welterman. No nice girl ought to go cycling with young men after dark in that way. Amy, you're old enough to know better!"

Amy covered her face with her hands and wept.

"Mary's cross to everybody to-day," said Hubert.

"She's a naughty sister," added Walter.

"You can go this once, Amy," observed Mrs. Coyne. "I suppose some older person is going with you."

"Mr. Spracht said he might come."

"Spracht!" Mary spoke the word through her set teeth. "That is a man I would willingly kill," she thought.

She left the table, arranged her bedroom, and put the pistol back in the box. Then she began, in agony, the Lord's Prayer. She stopped short.

"What's the use? What's the use? I must go through it all—alone," she said, brushing a tear from her cheek—"alone!"

* * * * *

Morton's fury, the fury of a man who had never been successfully opposed, spent its force. Since he had come East he had learned before he acted to put his ear to the ground. A train, unsignalled, might be coming his way. He respected his daughter's shrewdness as greatly as he feared her independence. That independence he would have willingly limited, but it was too

late. He suspected that Jack would end by becoming a fashionable fool, and he often wished, with bitterness, that Molly were not a girl. She announced, however, that she was a New Girl, with all the rights of a man and all the privileges of a woman.

Morton had made money for the pleasure of making it. Now he enjoyed the power it gave; but Molly was one of the few persons his wealth had not impressed. She was too well accustomed to luxury to care much about it, and Morton knew that he could force her neither to fear nor to respect him, though he knew that she loved him. He soon discovered that the education of her character could not be directed by him; she was being educated by her will acting on her surroundings.

Spracht had attacked Trevanion violently in the *Argus,* the rival of the *Gazette;* and Trevanion had answered in a very clever and good-humored letter, mostly written by Arthur March.

"I wrote Mr. Trevanion a note and congratulated him," Molly said to her father. "It is plain to me that he means to defy both Spracht and Charlemont. He says he's a Socialist; but not a 'destructive' Socialist. He does not deny that Socialism will in the future be a religion of its own; but at present his concern is to use it so that every man may be as contented as possible. Spracht is out in another letter. He raves; he talks of the abrogation of property and marriage, and altogether puts himself out of the count as a candidate."

Morton did not answer at once.

"You are right, Molly." He put down his New York paper and pondered. "He does not want to be a candidate; he wants to throw the Extreme Left, the Independent Workers and that crowd, over to Charlemont and against Trevanion. There's something in that Trevanion! I'm rather glad you met him. It may give me an excuse to go and see him."

Molly Morton laughed.

"You mean that it will give you a chance to buy him. There's no use of denying it. I know what's in your mind."

He looked at his daughter angrily.

"Oh, come, father! I haven't been reading the magazines without learning a great deal. Girls read something else besides love stories now."

"Muckraking!" exclaimed Morton between his teeth. "At the same time, a man like me has to protect himself. Where would you get your motor car and your trips to Florida and your evening gowns and the little pearl necklace and the old violin if I let the mob dictate to me?"

"Don't bring *me* in!" said Molly. "I could do without all these things except the violin; and I should be much happier if you would curtail these luxuries and help your people more."

"*My* people! I have no people except your mother and you and——"

"Oh, yes, you have!" Molly interrupted coolly. "There's Sandy McGill. You know you ought to help him. And there's Rebecca Limpinski. Her husband, whom you brought from California, was killed in the factory. He was one of your first men, and yet you gave the poor old

thing two weeks' wages—I mean the wages her husband would have earned in two weeks—and sent her adrift."

"Who told you that?" asked Morton.

"I read it in the *Argus.*"

"Wretched Socialist sheet!"

"But you did give Rebecca only two weeks—"

"I can't support paupers and live."

"I should prefer not to live, papa, if I had people cursing me under their breath because they *must* work for me. To tell you the truth, papa, I would, if I were you, try to find out what you can do to help these people. You have some responsibility to them and their children, I'm sure. But no; you'll wait until a strike comes, and then you'll be made poorer in spite of yourself, and they'll be ruined. There's no use in getting angry with me, and you know it!"

"I *do* know it!" he said. "And I wish you were a man! You'd be just as clever and not so softhearted. Nevertheless, I think I can buy Trevanion. Everybody has his price."

Molly took up her violin.

"Shall it be 'The Millions of Harlequin'?" she asked. "I can not play it as well as Mischa Elman, but you will like it. It has an auriferous sound."

CHAPTER XVII

AN UNEXPECTED spirit of revolt had suddenly alarmed the trustees of the factories of all kinds in Orvisville. And the meeting on Friday night at the Academy of Music—a low frame structure, with a large lyre painted in white and gold over the door—deepened suspicion and fear. The hall was crowded. People who had hitherto taken no interest in politics were in the front seats. The speakers were mostly unknown men; all the old war-horses were absent.

At half-past seven o'clock the curtain (on which various enticing advertisements were painted) rose, revealing a semicircle of chairs. These were filled by no person "prominent" in the social life of Orvisville. "Nobodies," whispered Morton, who, in a heavy motor coat, with the collar turned up, occupied with Molly a seat in the back of the gallery. Molly had early expressed her determination to be present, and her father was rather glad of the excuse to go with her. He knew that all the reports of the meeting brought to him would be partisan reports, and he wanted to hear what these people had to say for themselves. He was contemptuous and uneasy. He had never been uneasy before. "Nobodies!" he repeated.

"Oh, there's Sandy McGill!" Molly giggled. "He's just in front of the Grecian palace on the back scene; and Mr. March, of the bookstore; and

Mr. Trevanion; and isn't that one of your foremen?"

"Supleski! He'll pay for that!"

"And here comes the Rev. Mr. Jensen!"

"Weak-kneed!"

"Not at all," said Molly. "Everybody says that he is a very clever and good man. And, as we came in, I saw the Catholic priests."

"Not on the stage?"

"No; in the last row of the parquet."

Morton chuckled.

"This rot will only make Father Cook stronger for Charlemont. There's an awful crowd here. Glad all the windows are up. If there's the slightest disorder I'll have the City Council refuse the use of this hall to these Anarchists again."

Mr. Jensen opened the meeting with an exhortation that might have been a speech or a prayer. He said in a few well-chosen words that it was "unsectarian." Sandy McGill, wild-eyed, made, in his Scotch brogue, a rude indictment of the principles of Spracht. He was laughed at, jeered at, and later applauded when he told a story of Scottish thrift, and ended by saying, "I'd na show so much eloquence to-night if it war na a *gift.*"

Spracht's friends were inclined to make a disturbance; but the piano was rolled to the front, and two little girls, who had previously enlivened the Socialists' meeting with "The Shower of Pearls," stepped forward and began the "Washington Post March" for four hands. Being much applauded, they played a "Mazurka de Concert" with great precision.

"Half the men of our parish are here," said Father Cook uneasily.

"I told you so," answered Father Waldron.

Supleski, a giant of a man, with deep blue eyes, a blond beard, and a marked accent, arose. It was evident from the hand-clapping that he was not unknown.

"Louder! louder!" cried the crowd.

"I came here to-night to speak in a language I do not know well, because" (he placed his hand on his heart) "something here told me to speak. I am a workingman. I do not speak for myself, but for my fellows, who ask of this New World only the right to live as human beings live. That right, I see, has been denied them."

Howls of assent.

"He'll pay for this!" muttered Morton.

"The workingman with no children may live on what he gets. But what is a home without children? And they must live and they must have their chances. There ought to be a minimum wage."

The hall rocked with cheers and hisses. There seemed to be a difference of opinion here.

"Oh, *he'll* pay for this! I'll pay what I please," said Morton.

"Or what you *must!*" retorted Molly, as she turned and asked Theckla for her scent bottle, for it was warm.

"You will say to me, 'How dare you speak this—you who are a slave of Mr. Morton's——'"

"Poison Ivy Morton! Poison Ivy Morton!"

Morton caught the sound but not the words.

"What are they calling me?"

"Oh, it's a shame—it's a shame!" cried Molly, her eyes filling with tears. She put her arm through her father's. "Don't mind them, papa. Let us go!"

"No," said her father; "I'll hear it out. But I'll pay Supleski!"

"I have been a slave of Morton's long enough. I have made my way. I was once a poor Hun, whom everybody kicked. I have found out since" (he laughed) "that the Americans did not kick me because I was a Hun, but because I was in the way. I am now a skilled workman. Morton pays me as much as he thinks I'm worth *now;* but to-morrow I leave him and his tin cans——"

"Poison Ivy Morton!" roared Sandy McGill.

The meeting took up the cry.

"I go home to marry the woman who has waited over seven years for me. It has made me old to toil as I have—alone. And I have not grown pretty—do not laugh! I owe no gratitude to my employer. For many years I worked for him hard, and got less than a living; but I learned much in patience and courage, and now I am so skilled that I can leave him without fear."

"Ungrateful beast!" muttered Morton.

"That I almost starved in the beginning, in this land of freedom," Supleski went on breathlessly, "from which I expected so much, is true. But I am sure that the reason why I starved, and yet worked and sweated in winter and summer—beginning at seven and working until six, dead tired at night, and knowing that at the kick of the boss I might be thrust into want again—is not because the present order of industry is wrong,

but because the men who wield it are selfish or ignorant; and that you—all of you—are as much responsible as they, because you will not force laws that will remove the horrors of present slavery. This you can do by your votes."

Supleski spoke seriously, with frequent mistakes in English, but with so distinct an enunciation that everybody understood him.

"Therefore," he said, "I am not a Socialist."

There were some hisses, but from all parts of the hall came cries of "Order!"

"To elect Charlemont will be to enslave yourselves. He is the tool of Morton and the others——"

"Poison Ivy Morton!"

Supleski was obliged to stop.

"I'd like to beat them to death, the hounds! That hedge was your mother's idea, Molly. She *would* have it!"

"Cut it down, father."

"Never! I'd cover it with vitriol for these curs, if I could—the insolent herd, living on my wages and by my brains."

"I have not much more to say," continued Supleski. "It is you, ladies and gentlemen, who force poor men to house their children under conditions that are unspeakable. You wait until children are made orphans until you help them; yet the children of the Englishman Wendell would not be orphans to-day if you had forced such regulations as would have prevented the cogs getting loose in the machinery which old Sorenson in the suit factory kept because his big boss would not put in new stuff. Who dares to

face Charlemont and Pete Carlin to-day and oblige them to cease their protection of the bosses who find it cheaper to kill men and women than to protect them from danger? There's not one minister of the Gospel that dares to do it. Mr. Jensen is here to-night, I see; and that's a good sign. But he's the only one! I've no more to say—except 'Down with Charlemont, Pete Carlin, and Poison Ivy Morton!'"

The hall fairly rocked with cheers.

Morton was silent with rage.

Arthur March came next. His employer, Woolich, a middle-aged and serious-looking man, introduced him. March flushed and paled, but after the first few words gained courage.

"Nothing but the urgent necessity of the case induces me to speak here to-night, for I am no orator. I have to encourage those of my co-religionists—everybody here knows that I am a Catholic—and the Catholics of Orvisville have hitherto been accused of talking about what their Church has done for the poor, while supporting that corruption which is destroying the hearts and souls of the poor. I came here, with at least two hundred of my fellow-Catholics, to protest against those Catholics who follow Pete Carlin and his gang. I am not—thank God!—a Socialist; but I am with the Socialists of this town, as far as they stand for justice. Their talk of Utopia on earth is nonsense. Men don't become angels even in heaven, and I regard their proposition to deprive men of their fairly earned property, or even inherited property, as a crime." (There were hisses and cheers here.) "I feel that

it is time that we Catholics ceased to talk of what is called charity, and substitute justice—that justice which comes from the love of one's neighbor, and is a higher virtue than the giving to people what we don't want ourselves.

"The religious Orders in the Catholic Church are doing God's work, as all know. There is not a man here that does not bless the name of the Sisters of Charity who run our hospitals" (Cheers). "But the Sisters treat tenderly the sick, and no poor sick man is ever turned away; and they care for the orphans. But what we want to do in this town is to prevent people from ever being forced to go to the hospital because they are lead-poisoned or lamed in the factories, or half suffocated in the air of the back alleys, or threatened with consumption because they can not get sufficient food or live in the light. Therefore, I am here to-night to say that, in spite of Pete Carlin, the leader of our people at picnics, we Catholics have not forgotten that we are American citizens, and that the teachings of our religion—outlined in the famous Letter of that grand dead Pope, Leo XIII, on Capital and Labor—are behind the enthusiasm we show in the best of all causes—that of justice."

Loud cheers interrupted March.

"It's up to you, Father Cook!" cried out Sandy McGill. "Why don't you let Father Waldron talk, if you're afraid of your friend Charlemont?"

Father Cook arose from his seat, and his well-known smile induced frantic cheering on all sides.

"It's not easy to bother *him!*" said Sandy.

"I'm with you," Father Cook said. "Count on

me. It's late, boys; I must go. Father Waldron will speak another time."

A way was made for him and his assistant, and the cheering followed them to the door.

"Well, Father Waldron," he said, "we must put our strength into the movement or it will fall into evil hands. Justice, after all, is charity."

Trevanion stood up. Somehow or other he seemed to dominate the assembly. There was a dead silence as he began to speak.

"It has been suggested," he said, "that I run for Mayor of Orvisville on an Independent ticket, and I will accept the nomination if it is offered me. And I mean to win! I do not want support from anybody who is in doubt about my sentiments. In this country a man can hold any opinion he pleases and not be treated with contempt. There is no public opinion that will condemn me if I should choose to beeome a Mohammedan tomorrow. Now, I am a Socialist. I do not ask anybody to approve of my opinions or to vote for me or against me because of my opinions. I do not stand for free love, but I hold that a time will come when both marriage and property will be abolished by the common sense of mankind."

"I protest," called out Mr. Jensen. "I am here to support the cause of reform, but not to sympathize with Anarchy. If my colleague, Father Cook, were here he would join my protest."

"Probably," said Trevanion, when he could again be heard; "and by losing you and him the cause of justice would lose two valuable allies.

I will, however, promise that, although I look on these tenets as part of my creed, I shall confine myself—if you elect me—to the work of making our beautiful city less helpless before the tyranny of the Trusts. I hold that timidity or poverty almost makes men helpless before these giants; but I feel that the crimes of Capital—its tyranny over the crushed worker, the undeserved luxury of the irresponsible rich, and the horribly unequal distinctions of wealth—can be cured by intelligent votes. If I were sure it was too late to enlist the power of the people working through the Government, I should become a Syndicalist tomorrow; I would prefer the shrieks of the destroyer to the trumpets of the victorious tyrant."

"There's something in that man," whispered Morton. "Notice how quiet the fools are! I shall buy him."

"I don't believe you can, dad. 'Marriage and property'!" she added, with a subdued laugh. "Wait until he is married and has property."

"He's dangerous!"

"Politicians," Trevanion went on, "are easily corrupted by capitalists. Under a Socialistic government this will be impossible, and——"

"How are you going to protect the Socialist politician of the future from the bribes, let us say, of the corrupt capitalists of other un-Socialistic countries?" interrupted Arthur March.

There was some laughter, and cries of "Question—question!"

"No," said March, "I did not mean it as a question to be answered now. I simply put it to have an opportunity to say that Mr. Trevanion, if he

becomes our candidate, will, for the present, confine himself to the amelioration of the condition of the laborers. For the present he will pledge himself not to urge confiscation by the State, but co-operation among our people themselves."

Trevanion paused a moment, frowned, and answered:

"I promise."

"Then we are with you," said March. "Three cheers for Trevanion!"

And he was allowed to finish his speech.

There was more talk after this and some music.

"You had better go home with Theckla in the car," Morton said to his daughter, after the meeting had closed. "I have an engagement with Spracht to talk over things—and I must waylay Trevanion. It's early yet."

Trevanion came out into the vestibule as Morton and his daughter entered it from the Auditorium.

"I heard you again with great pleasure—I hope you remember me," said Molly Morton. "I can not agree with your sentiments, however."

Trevanion showed that he was pleased, and she smiled.

"I couldn't possibly forget you, Miss Morton," he said.

"I should like to speak with you a moment. You know me, of course?" Morton spoke rather haughtily. "Molly, you will go home with Theckla in the car. Good-night!"

Molly flashed another glance at George Trevanion, and followed her maid a few steps for-

ward, waiting for the crowd to move. She did not, however, miss the dialogue that followed.

"Can you come with me to the hotel? I should like to have a talk with you."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Morton, but I must see one or two people here first."

"Oh! Meet me in fifteen minutes, then."

"I really can not."

"But, my good man," Morton said authoritatively, "it's important!"

"It's not important to me. But, if you can come to my father's house in half an hour, I'll see you. I generally receive visitors in my own home."

Morton tightened his lips.

"Oh, well, I'll come!"

In a very bad humor he walked slowly toward the hotel. Spracht had not yet arrived. Morton left a message with the clerk, asking Spracht to meet him in three-quarters of an hour at the corner of Cleveland and Second streets, just beyond the lots. Sandy McGill, hanging listlessly over the hotel register, heard the message and suddenly seemed to brighten up; then he frowned, and, looking around stealthily, took a revolver from his back pocket. In a flash he put it back again. He went to the door and looked out. He fingered the pistol to make sure it was safe. Suddenly Mr. Jensen came running from the street opposite the hotel.

"Sandy," he called, "I must catch the last train. I have just heard that my daughter and Amy Coyne, with two of those boys of Spracht's crowd, left for New York on the six o'clock train. I've

only a minute. Tell my wife that I've gone to New York with Sadie. The truth would break her heart."

"Spracht!" responded Sandy, contorting his face.

Mr. Jensen rushed off toward the station.

"Have you a clue?" called out Sandy hoarsely.

"Yes."

The train had reached the station. It would remain there twelve minutes—Mr. Jensen could easily catch it.

CHAPTER XVIII

IT HAD been a terrible evening for Mary Coyne. It was shortly after six o'clock when the boys came to tell her that Amy had gone with some friends on the 6.30 train, and that she had said she would be back on the 12.15. Where had Amy gone? With whom? Herbert did not know where she had gone in New York; he thought that the girl with her was Sadie Jensen, and the boys Jack Morton and Herman Welterman.

"It's Spracht's work!" Mary said. "He has degraded them, as he degrades all he touches."

To whom could she turn? Trevanion was not at home; she could not make a scandal by interrupting him at the meeting. The worst had happened. She turned aside from the hopeless thought of going to New York and looking helplessly for Amy. Spracht might tell her, if he would. She put on her hat and coat. Her mother was upstairs, with a bad headache. She took the revolver from its box and placed it in her bag. She was determined to force something from Spracht. Why should she care what she did now? There was no hope in the future, no solace in the present. She would cease for a while to look on life as women looked on it. If the God she had always believed in were no more, there was no place for her or any other woman. She looked carefully at the pistol, and saw that, with the exception of the one missing cartridge, it was fully loaded. Amy! Oh, little Amy!

A sullen fury took possession of Mary. If Spracht would not help her, she would kill him. But she must see Madeline first, and ask her if she knew where Spracht lived. Then she remembered that Madeline would probably be at church, as it was the first Friday of the month, and Madeline, she knew, never missed the service.

She found that there was no evening service at Father Cook's church; she thought it all over in a kind of stupor. Oh, yes, Madeline always went to the church in Cleveland Street! Stopping a street car, scarcely knowing what she did, she reached Cleveland Street in five minutes. She would kill Spracht if he derided her, or refused to give a clew to Amy's whereabouts.

The outer doors of St. Francis Xavier's were open. She pushed against the brass-studded green leather door beyond, and found herself in the crowded church. The altar glowed with lights, the red star before the golden tabernacle seeming like a lonely thing apart. She knelt down on the bench behind the last pew. The silence, the glow of the lights, the slight smell of incense irritated her. Time would be lost. The singing, organ playing, perhaps a long sermon would keep her from Madeline and her purpose. She felt the pistol in her silk bag. She knew *now* that she would kill Spracht, whether he derided her or not. She grew more and more impatient. What mockery all this was, if what Dr. Wortley had said was true!

"What is this service?" she asked, tapping the woman in front of her gently on the shoulder.

"Sermon and Benediction," the woman whispered, "every First Friday, you know."

"Oh, this cursed black Friday for me!" she said to herself.

There was a stir in front of the blazing altar, and a tall, thin man ascended the pulpit stairs. Mary groaned and clenched her fists. He was about to talk! The priest began by saying a short prayer; and Mary, wishing it was all over, was annoyed to see him making the Sign of the Cross. She did not listen to the first words the preacher uttered; she was indifferent to what he said and to what he was about to say; but his voice was so clear and his words so simple that they gradually caught her attention.

"The word of God is the Bible," he said; "and the Bible, especially the New Testament, interpreted by the infallible Church, can not err. It is the very voice of Christ speaking to us. Christ lives—Christ loves us. If there had been only one soul on earth, Christ would have died for it, were it your soul or mine."

Mary's interest became intense; the clergyman really believed that the Bible was inspired by God! He went on. But, occupied with this amazing thought, and the more amazing assertion that Christ loved and would have died for her soul *alone,* she heard no more until the preacher said:

"He gave us His divine body and blood, His precious gift, His memorial. Before this hour passes you will kneel and adore His body, blood, soul, and divinity exposed on the altar. . . .

"It was the reading of a passage in one of St.

Paul's Epistles that gave an Augustine to the Church. Seduced in his youth from the religion of his pious mother, Monica, into the Manichean heresy, Augustine became not only shipwrecked in faith, but also dissolute in morals. One day while he is in company with his friends Alipius and Pontianus, the latter tells of the extraordinary life and sanctity of St. Anthony. Augustine listens with marked attention to the narrative of his friend, and then replies with emotion. 'These ignorant men take the kingdom of heaven by violence, and we, with all our learning, remain wallowing in the mire of sin.' Retiring afterward into the garden, he sits under a fig tree and gives vent to tears. He is struggling between virtue and vice. God gently calls him upward to Himself, but his passions chain him to earth. While virtue and vice are struggling for the supremacy, Augustine hears the voice of a child uttering these words, *'Tolle lege—tolle lege,'*—'Take up and read—take up and read.' He instantly rises; and, knowing that these were not the usual expressions of a child, he recognizes in that utterance a voice from heaven. Entering the house, he finds the Epistles of St. Paul open, and his eyes fell on these words: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.' He reads no more. From that moment dates his conversion."

Mary seemed to awaken from a trance. The hymn and the organ music left her unmoved; but suddenly, above the silent, tense throng, she saw

the glittering monstrance raised by the priest, and she knew that she beheld the Bread of Life. There was no need for more—she *knew*. The door of the tabernacle was closed; the priest, in his splendid cope, knelt at the foot of the altar.

Mary, strengthened in soul, silently made her way from the incense-laden air, walked slowly to the other side of the street, and taking the revolver from her bag, threw it with all her strength into one of the stagnant pools that covered the weed-grown lots, which the city's fathers had so long neglected. She heard a splash, and then she turned to wait for Madeline.

"Oh, Madeline," she cried, "I have a horrible thing to tell you! Amy is gone!"

"The Lord between us and harm, my poor Mary!" said Madeline.

"But, Madeline, I leave it all to God. I have knelt before Him, and He has given me peace."

Madeline, thinking that her friend had temporarily gone mad, forced her to walk up and down in the cold air.

"Madeline, I came out intending to kill Spracht!"

"Poor child!"

Madeline took her friend home, soothed her, and heard the whole story.

"I leave it to God—I leave it to God!" wept Mary.

Madeline accompanied Mary home to her door. A boy in the uniform of a telegraph messenger was trying to unbolt the garden gate.

"Are you Miss Coyne?" he asked.

"Oh, read it, Madeline! I can't."



Madeline opened the envelope.

"I married your sister to Jack Morton at Westbrook Station, where no license is required. Sadie is with me.

"JENSEN."

"Another divorce!" commented Madeline. "But Amy's made an honest man of him for a time!"

"I left it to God," Mary said. "Oh, Madeline, suppose I had killed Spracht?" Then she added, after a pause: "At what time is the service in your church to-morrow?"

"The first Mass is at six o'clock."

"I'll be there."

"The age of miracles is not passed!" was Madeline's mental comment, as she went homeward, her heart full of joy and thankfulness. "She'll never marry Trevanion now, if he does be Mayor of Orvisville. Glory be to God! 'Tis a strange world!"

* * * * *

There was an inexplicable sense of peace and joy in Mary Coyne's heart next morning, as she softly stole into her little brothers' room in the half dusk, adjusted the tumbled bedclothes, and then went to Mass. The word "Mass" as yet had no meaning to her. She was about to sit at the foot of Christ, and most humbly bless His name.

The newspaper had not yet been left on the doorstep. She looked for it, fearing to find an allusion to Amy's escapade among its telegrams. The *Gazette* always made a specialty of scandals and crimes of all sorts. The morning was clear

and crisp, and the grayish-pink chrysanthemums in the garden threw their aromatic scent at her.

"I can bear anything now," she said. "Amy, at least, is not disgraced. And I will give *him* back his ring. I can bear it now—very well."

But for an instant the old wave of jealousy swept over her heart. To give him up to another! And she was sure that this other had already begun to fill her place in his heart.

She reached the church. It was nearly empty. Two candles burned on the main altar, and the little ruby glowed still, larger in the shadow. Somebody had left a rather worn child's prayer-book on the seat of the last pew in front of the confessional. It was early. She saw a priest enter the curious little wooden box. She noticed the word "Women" on one side and "Men" on the other. She fixed her attention on the "Ordinary of the Mass." *"Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam."* The English words were on the other side of the page. They burned before her. She had sinned. She was a murderess at heart. A woman with a serene and sweet face came from the confessional. Mary Coyne slowly and humbly opened the door and went in. The gloom frightened her. The grille suddenly brightened, she saw a shadowy face, and a kind voice said:

"Well, my child?"

Then the light began to shine on the way of her future. The priest, speaking for Christ, told her what to do. There was no more doubt.

CHAPTER XIX

"I'LL have no playing fast and loose with Mary Coyne," said Mrs. Trevanion to her son. "If you're fool enough to go into politics, George, and get your head swelled, it's her you'll marry and no one else."

Mrs. Trevanion was pouring out tea in her kitchen at half-past five o'clock in the morning. She was an early riser, as was her son, who had always been obliged to do his reading and studying before he went out in the morning. There was a special reason for his early rising to-day. Molly Morton had sent a note by a chauffeur, begging him to come to The Hills at once. The note was evidently written in agitation and in haste; hence Mrs. Trevanion's speech. In her mind the slightest look or attention from an unmarried woman to her son meant matrimonial designs.

"Mother," said Trevanion, somewhat impatiently, "I wish that you wouldn't say such things. Mary will never marry me—I know it. And it is not my fault. Miss Morton probably wants to make up for what her father said to me last night."

He paused and swallowed hard; it was not a pleasant memory.

"Last night, after the meeting, when you were sound asleep, Mr. Morton came here. He requested to see me at the door of the Academy. He simply wanted to buy me by asking me to

throw up my position and come to him at an increase of salary, with the understanding that I should not run against Charlemont. I said, 'I am not for sale.' He looked about the little parlor, and answered: 'It wouldn't take much to buy *all* you own.'"

"The brute!" Mrs. Trevanion exclaimed, thinking of the blue and yellow antimacassars knitted in silk by her own hands.

"'You're almost a pauper,' he went on. 'I could buy all you have with an hour's income.' He lost his temper. I kept mine and showed him the door. Spracht was waiting for him. When I was out of our own house I told him what I thought of him, and Spracht heard me."

"I wouldn't go near that girl!" said Mrs. Trevanion, her heart heavy. It seemed to her as if she were about to lose her son. Nonsense! she thought. And yet she was a Welshwoman, and the Welsh can see the grass grow and distinguish gray carts in the dusk.

Trevanion walked quickly across the lots. Custom had taught him to pick his steps among the shallow ponds and puddles. He was old enough to have discovered that coincidences are not exceptions to the rule of life. Just in front of St. Francis' Church, after he had crossed the dryest part of the lot, making his way through a tangle of wild asters and Jamestown weeds, he met Mary Coyne. She was paler than usual, but there was a look in her face he had not seen before—a kind of glow that was like a covered light.

He shook hands with her.

"You are out early?"

"And you?" she asked.

"Yes; Miss Morton has sent for me."

She started, and looked wistfully into his face.

"Will you walk with me toward The Hills?" he asked. "It's a lovely day."

She looked very slim and graceful in her simple black hat and frock. She joined him quickly.

"It's a long time since we had a walk together, Mary. They talk of making me the mayor. If they nominate me, I shall win. It's a great opportunity."

"You will make the most of it. I hope you will win. I shall return your ring to-night, George. You are free, and I shall be free, too—no, don't protest! I must live for mother and the boys. Amy is married to Jack Morton——"

"Good heavens!" he stopped short. "Why, Jack Morton is a fool! He has been trying to get through college for five years."

"Amy isn't very clever—poor little Amy!" she added, with a catch in her voice. "Perhaps Miss Morton may want to see you about this subject. She may regard the marriage as a very dreadful thing."

"It *is* a dreadful thing for Amy, I should say. She'll have to stand a lot. Old Morton has the temper of the devil."

"It might be worse," murmured Mary to herself; and then aloud: "There are two matters I want to speak to you about. First, I am going to be a Catholic. It's the only Church for people who have sinned." As she spoke the words of the priest, *"Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam,"* ran

through her head like music. "Secondly, I went out last night" (she could hardly utter the words; she bowed her head that she might not meet his eyes)—"I went out last night with the intention of killing Spracht. Now I have told you—it is over! I was a murderess at heart. I shall always be as friendly with you as possible, but that's all. I am not worthy!"

Before he could speak she had rapidly crossed the street and was running away. She turned the corner. The flutter of her veil was the last he saw of her.

* * * * *

Trevanion stood before Molly Morton in the big drawing-room, lit now by gray light and one or two of the lamps. She was in black; her eyes were red from weeping, and her face deadly white. She stood near a small table, crowded with silver things. Her right hand rested on a small revolver among them.

"You've heard it!" she said in a low voice. "I felt that I must see you at once."

It was strange! Here was another woman about to make another incomprehensible revelation to him.

"Surely you have heard that my father was killed last night." She looked at him closely. "Thank God!" she said passionately. "You are telling me the truth. Your eyes can't lie."

"Why shouldn't I tell you the truth, Miss Morton?"

"If you had killed my father you wouldn't be so ready to tell the truth."

"Killed your father! Why should I kill your

father?" he asked, feeling as if he had escaped one mad woman only to be ushered into the presence of another; but the usually independent Molly looked so fragile, so pathetic, so unhappy, that his heart went out to her. "I had no ill-will against your father. He did say some disagreeable things to me, and I retorted; but that's all in a man's working day."

"Spracht heard you. He says that you shot at him, but that the ball missed and struck father."

"The liar!"

Molly gave him the revolver.

"Last night I waited for father a long time, and then I took Theckla (it was just after midnight) to try to find him. Sometimes he stayed too late at the hotel, and was not always quite—quite—himself. He wasn't at the hotel."

Trevanion turned the pistol in his hand helplessly.

"It has my name on it!"

"Isn't it yours?"

"I never saw it until now."

"Thank God again!" she said. "The clerk at the desk told me that father had arranged to meet Spracht in Cleveland, at a corner. There I went. A small crowd had gathered. When I saw the crowd, I got out of the car (it's a badly paved place) and went quickly across the lots. As I ran I stepped into a marshy place, and my foot struck against this. I stopped and picked it up. You are the only person who has seen it. I believe in you," she added, blushing. "This proves it."

"This proves what?" he asked. "One ball has been used, I see."

"The people in the crowd said," she went on, unheeding, "that only one shot had been fired. It apparently only slightly wounded my father, who started homeward, accompanied by Spracht. Spracht said that the bullet had been fired at *him*. My father made the necessary deposition for the police. Spracht said that he refused to see a doctor. I drove home as fast as I could. We found him dead under the ivy hedge. Spracht was trying to raise him; he had swooned suddenly. 'I could swear that Trevanion had done this. I heard him threaten both your father and me not ten minutes before the shot was fired,' he told me."

"And you did not believe him, though you had the pistol in your hand?"

"No; I trusted you."

A flash horribly illuminating passed through his mind. Mary Coyne had done the deed; she had missed her aim—that was all—and Spracht still lived. This, then, was the revolver Mr. Coyne had promised to give him before he died.

"May I sit down?" he asked, feeling faint.

She hastily pushed a chair toward him. He sat down heavily, perspiration coming to his forehead.

"You know who had this pistol?"

He nodded his head in the affirmative.

"Who?"

"I would rather die than tell."

"It would have looked rather bad for you if Spracht or the police had found it. Spracht says that my father was killed by that one bullet." She stopped to steady herself. "Oh, Mr. Trevanion,

you don't know what he was to me—poor dad! The outside could never guess he was so dear, so kind, so indulgent. Mother is good and sweet, though a little spoiled; she was to him always a doll to be petted, but I was his comrade. You mustn't judge. He said he was no better than other business men and no worse. After we had found the body, and the doctors had done all they could, Spracht came to me to say that he knew you had shot at him and hit father; but that he supposed you would be pleased to know that you had killed at least one man whom you hated: for your last words to my father had been full of hatred."

"No!" said Trevanion—"no! We stood at the gate, and I gave him reply for reply—that's all."

"Oh, I believe it! But if that pistol, with your name scratched on it, had been discovered by the police!"

Trevanion shuddered.

"Mr. Trevanion, I want to ask you to help me. I'm alone, practically. My mother is ill now; and even if she were well she could not help me. You know what Jack is. The associates of my father, if they have their way, will let things go on as they are—they will not cut down the poison ivy hedge. Father has left me great power in his will, and I want to use it well. Of course, I don't take your talk about marriage and property seriously." (Sad as she was, a faint glint of humor came into her eyes.) "I'd like after a while to make a little committee, including that Catholic priest—who is interested in everything—to rem-

edy what is wrong in our relations with the wage-earners. Will you help me?"

"With all my heart, if I can."

He said it gladly, but immediately afterward his heart was heavy. The picture of Mary Coyne rose before him.

Suddenly he caught Molly's grateful smile, and he stood up, feeling that he was a man again. She took both his hands and said:

"Thank you!"

He went out slowly. He had reached the turning that led from the avenue of oaks to the street when he saw two policemen and a man in civilian clothes approaching. A hand was placed on his shoulder. One of the policemen, accompanied by Spracht, paused.

"I arrest you, sir," one of them said respectfully, "for——"

Spracht interrupted him, laughing cynically:

"For the murder of Wadsworth Morton."

Trevanion mechanically put his hand into his right coat pocket; it touched the fatal pistol—he must be silent. He realized that.

Trevanion looked him straight in the eye.

"On your testimony, Spracht?"

Spracht laughed contemptuously.

"I think," Trevanion added deliberately, "that you are more likely to be guilty than I. You were the last man with him."

Spracht turned pale. The suggestion was not pleasant; but Trevanion, putting his right hand again into the pocket of his short coat, felt the cold touch of the pistol. If they should search him! He knew that he would be searched!

"Waylen," he said, speaking to the policeman he knew, "there will be no question about bail. Will you take me to some place where I can telephone to Mr. Woolich?"

"Certainly, sir," answered Waylen, with a black look at Spracht. "If you will get into the auto we will take you anywhere. Mr. Spracht is walking, I believe."

"I can't afford to be seen with a criminal," was Spracht's parting shot.

Trevanion entered the automobile with the policeman.

Trevanion believed that Mary had killed Morton in her attempt to shoot Spracht. He must be silent. Now he realized that she was no longer inexpressibly dear to him; for his heart softened at the remembrance of Molly Morton's "I trust you." The evidence was against him—the quarrel, the pistol, which he had no hope of concealing; the testimony of Spracht, who wanted to clear the way for Charlemont—all. Unless Mary Coyne herself spoke he must take the consequences; and he would, even if it must be with a rope around his neck. Molly Morton would trust him to the end, and his mother would not doubt his word. Here was infinite consolation.

CHAPTER XX

NEITHER the representatives of the *Gazette* nor the reporters of the *Argus* were admitted to the police station; and when the representatives of the New York papers arrived Trevanion was still in detention; but the authorities, pending the arrival of the prosecuting attorney, were discreetly silent. In the confusion—Trevanion had a certain dignity, too—no attempt had been made to search him, and, fortunately, Spracht had no knowledge of the existence of the incriminating revolver. Trevanion thought over Mary's admission that she intended to kill Spracht, and looked at it from every point of view. He did not doubt her assertion that she had desired to kill him.

It is true that he had always looked on Mary as, in ordinary life, the gentlest of human beings; and yet he was aware that there was a great basis of firmness in her character, and that she had a strong will. He remembered, too, that once, when they were reading a novel of the French Revolution, his mother had said: "I could feel as Charlotte Corday felt." And Mary had added, almost violently: "I could *act* as Charlotte Corday acted. There was no justice anywhere in France then." He recalled also that he had been somewhat shocked by her resolute speech and the determined gleam in her eyes as she spoke. Thinking of this, and of Mary's force of character as shown on many occasions, he came to

the conclusion that, by mistake, she had killed Morton—and there was the testimony of the empty cartridge of the revolver! It had been ascertained, by Spracht's testimony, that only one shot had been fired. If he could only get rid of the horrible pistol!

The authorities of Orvisville were slow in all their proceedings; they were unaccustomed to sensations of this kind. Besides, the inquest on the body of Morton had not yet been held. Trevanion hoped to profit by the vacillating proceedings to discard the telltale weapon. During the hour of detention he glowed with delight when he recalled Molly's "I trust you!" The pistol she had given him might be the means of sending him to the scaffold; and yet he knew that he would rather stand—as he stood—with the fear of condemnation in his heart, than not to have heard these words. Mary Coyne, he said to himself, was the average woman, capable of love—great love!—but not of the perfect love that casts out all doubt. To be loved was sweet, but to be loved with a love that could trust so perfectly was the perfection of human happiness.

The authorities understood the delicacy of their position. They owed much to Charlemont. But if Trevanion should be treated with what the public might regard as harshness, Charlemont would be killed politically; and the afternoon papers, acting on what slight information they had, began to lay plans to make political capital out of the occurrence. The marriage of Jack Morton, duly reported, fell flat.

* * * * *

Mary Coyne was in the parlor, sewing as usual, when Amy burst in. She threw herself into her sister's arms and kissed her repeatedly. Mary dropped her head on her arms and wept.

"Oh, Amy!" her sobs choked her words—"Oh, Amy, how could you?"

"How could I?" asked Amy, on the defensive. "I don't see why you should make such a fuss about nothing. Of course I've made sacrifices; I've cut my education in two, and I can't expect to graduate *now*. But, then, I'm a married woman, and Jack's devoted to me."

"Where is he?" Mary asked. It was hopeless to try to make Amy understand.

"He has gone over to see his sister—this news is awful. He'll be over to get his mother's blessing as soon as he can. But you must manage something black for me at once, Mary. I can't show myself to Jack's mother and sister in this thing."

Amy looked at herself in the glass as she removed her raincoat.

"If you had let me go into mourning for father I'd have something decent to wear now. Just telephone—oh, I forgot about the telephone! Just run downtown and get me something. I'll wait here until mother comes from market—there's where she always is at this hour. Does she know?"

"Yes."

"Well, I must take time to tell you all about it before you go. You know that nice Mr. Spracht, who was to join our party when he

could, told Jack and Herman about some lovely places in New York where they dance all the new dances, and the boys thought it would be great fun to take us with them. Of course Sadie and I were *wild* to go; but when it came to spending the night in New York (you'd have to do that if you wanted to see the fun at its best), Sadie said she thought it wouldn't be right. There was no harm in going, of course, she knew—and with such nice boys. Then Jack said that Mr. Spracht had told them that he had an aunt in New York, who would go with us to the dance, and take care of us girls afterward. That made things all right, naturally. Sadie's people are like you, Mary—so old-fashioned in their ideas! We started. But somebody told Sadie's father; and, as it happened, there was a hot box, or something the matter with the slow train, and Mr. Jensen had time to telegraph to New York to have us stopped at the station. But Jack and I—Jack is awfully clever—managed to sneak out with the crowd, and Sadie and Herman were caught and detained.

"When Mr. Jensen arrived Sadie said she never heard a man rave as her father raved, and Herman had to tell where we had gone. Mr. Jensen sent Herman to a hotel, and took Sadie with him. Well, he found us in a most splendid place, where we were having the time of our lives, dancing every number (I must say the girls drank and smoked, which I didn't like at all), when Mr. Jensen appeared. He bundled us all on a train—Sadie howling and crying. We got out at some little station, and there was a clergyman friend

of Mr. Jensen's. 'You've behaved like a blackguard, Jack Morton!' said Mr. Jensen. 'You know what all this means for the future of this poor girl. When my daughter returns with me to-morrow, after having spent a few hours in New York, no questions will be asked; but what will be said of Amy Coyne? She has no father to protect her. I shall marry you here and now.' Jack hesitated a moment: 'Father might—' But Mr. Jensen interrupted: 'You're over age. Yes or no?' 'Yes,' replied Jack. 'I've always liked Amy.' 'Yes, it is!' said Mr. Jensen. So now I'm Mrs. Jack Morton. And Jack said even if his father did insist on a divorce, I'd have to have alimony. Don't look so shocked, Mary! Jack really loves me, and I like him, and I like being Mrs. Jack Morton; and now that my poor, dear father-in-law is dead I'll hold my own with the others. I'll run up to my room, Mary, while you see what you can do about this mourning."

"Beef twenty-eight cents a pound!" Mrs. Coyne's voice began its lamentations as soon as she crossed the threshold. "Amy, my dear, dear child!"

There was a flutter of kisses and embraces.

"And so you're Mrs. Jack Morton! Well, well! If it hadn't been for my firmness in opposing Mary's foolish notions you'd probably have lived to be an old maid or married a nobody, like Arthur March."

"Mary meant well," said Amy, who began to see faintly the danger she had escaped. "But don't let us blame anybody. I'm Mrs. Jack Morton—Mrs. Jackson Wadsworth Morton. Jack

will be very rich, and he says he will take care of you all. He appreciates the sacrifice I've made in giving up my education for him. But of course I'll have private lessons in music and deportment. We'll go a lot into society. Mr. Spracht's aunt will perhaps——"

"Mr. Spracht has no aunt in New York, Amy. Madeline will tell you that. But, oh, Amy, be quiet and gentle, and good and devoted to your husband! And do try to be our own little Amy again, and Jack will always love you, as I do."

Amy was touched.

"I will, Mary. I really don't believe I'll ever get a divorce at all—unless Jack does something outrageous. Run down and see about something black, Mary—do!"

"At once!" commanded Mrs. Coyne.

"But," asked Mary, who had her mind centered on Amy, "why black? I don't quite understand."

"The town is full of it! Mr. Morton was shot last night, and everybody says they've arrested George Trevanion for the murder. What an escape you've had, Mary! Who would have thought it of George?"

Mary arose, pale and rigid.

"I don't believe it," she said.

But it might be true. She had heard him rage against the capitalists as tyrants and murderers; and she herself had not resisted the temptation to kill a man whom she regarded as the murderer of innocence and virtue.

"It is not true!" said Amy. "George might talk about capitalists, but he would never kill anybody. Oh, Mary, I feel just as you do—he

couldn't have done such a thing! It will blow over—this talk about him. It must have been one of those Dagos or Huns that killed Mr. Morton. I'm sure it wasn't George!"

"Thank you, Amy dear!" said Mary fervently.

"Now hurry up the black, Mary!" commanded her mother. "Amy can afford, while *I* can't afford, to mourn decently. She can't disgrace her husband's family by going about in colors. And if Mrs. Morton tries to patronize you, Amy, just let her know that your father was a respected clergyman, and that if I'm not a Colonial dame, it's not because I'm not descended from one of the most prominent witches that was ever hanged at Salem. Don't let her think you haven't a right to live!"

"Right to live, mother! How you talk! If anybody has a right to live it is Mrs. Jackson Wadsworth Morton."

On her way downtown Mary called on Mrs. Trevanion. The old woman was very calm. She kissed Mary.

"I admit that George has changed of late, but you may be sure that he never thought of such a terrible thing. If you could believe him guilty you would be unworthy of him."

"I *am* unworthy of him," said Mary humbly; "and I think he has found that out."

Mrs. Trevanion did not hear. She was absorbed in the thought of her son.

"Find Madeline La Clare and go to see him. You can't go alone. I can't leave his father—

my man is worse than usual. Go and find out what it all means."

Mary felt that she must obey. She found Madeline La Clare, who, on the strength of her new plans, went over to New York only occasionally. With Madeline's expert assistance Mary managed to have the proper kind of "black" sent home to her sister.

"For Mrs. Jack Morton," Madeline said in her grandest manner to the shop-keeper; "and the bill after the funeral."

"I shouldn't have dared to do that," observed Mary. "I kept wondering all the time how I should raise the money to pay for all that."

"You poor, unworldly creature! And now, Mary, you see I am becoming more practical. Yesterday Arthur March asked me to marry him. But I declined, not feeling myself in any sense his equal. You know he is a man of culture, and I told him I'd shame him with my poor English. He said: 'Not at all! Just speak French when you're not sure of your English.' But, in any case, Mary, I want to wait till I make a little money in our new venture. If I succeed, he can drop the bookshop and go with us; 'for,' said I, 'the best friend a poor couple can have in these troublous times is a bank account.' So there's how it stands."

"I am *so* glad!" said Mary.

"So am I. But tell me on the quiet, Mary, have you given up Trevanion entirely?"

"My dear," said Mary, "I think you'll find that he's given me up. No—don't talk about it!"

Madeline was compelled by the entreaty of the tone to be silent.

"Miss Coyne!" the policeman said, returning to the farthest corner of the office and looking out of the window as Madeline and she were admitted to the station-house.

Mary advanced, Madeline remaining near the door.

"Tell my mother that I am well, and that I expect to see her to-night. The charge is absurd," Trevanion said. "This is merely a technical delay."

He looked toward the policeman, whose back was turned toward him. He drew the pistol from his pocket.

"Do you know this pistol?" he whispered.

"Yes, of course!" Mary drew back as if she had seen an evil spirit. "It was my father's. He promised to give it to you."

"If they search me and find this it will mean hanging for me probably."

"Why?" she asked. "You couldn't have killed him with that pistol. I had it last night."

"Do you believe that I killed him?"

She flushed.

"I quite understand. It was only by a miracle last night that I was prevented from killing Spracht. Any of us may commit an awful crime if we are not delivered from temptation."

She deftly took the pistol. The policeman slowly turned, but it had disappeared in her bag.

"I am safe, thank God!" he whispered. "But you doubt me."

"You are safe," she answered. "I shall tell your mother so. And now good-by!"

"Good-by!" he said.

* * * * *

No case could be made against Trevanion. Spracht's charges were vague, and evidently dictated by malice. He was accused of trying to blacken the character of an innocent man in order to defeat a political rival.

No sooner was the funeral of Wadsworth Morton over than Trevanion was triumphantly nominated on a Fusion Ticket for the mayoralty. Charlemont and his followers admitted that this was equivalent to defeat at the polls, and cursed Spracht for his zeal. Mrs. Morton was prostrated, and Molly asked Trevanion's advice on all business matters. Mrs. Jack Morton installed herself in one of the best suites of rooms on The Hills, and announced that in the future she and Jack would see that her mother and the boys were properly cared for. One night the hedge of poison ivy was cut down and burned by Molly's orders.

"Trevanion," said Molly, as she watched it disappear, "let us see that a new custom comes. You know the people, you feel their wrongs. Let us keep the great interests of my father at their best. You must own property, whether you will or not, if you expect to be converted into a belief of the sacredness of my marriage."

She laughed.

"I am no longer a Socialist—that is, no longer a *destructive* Socialist," he answered. "But something must be done, or nearly all the working world will be destructively Socialistic. And,

Molly, a man must believe in a Divine Master to feel and know the real sweetness of marriage."

* * * * *

Isaac Welterman, passing the Coyne house one evening on his way to his daily lesson from Father Waldron, happened to see Mary at her sewing in the lamplight. The rain and the mist made a dark frame for her soft hair and gentle face. She looked upward for a moment, and he remembered the lines:

> So shows my soul before the Lamb,
> My spirit before Thee;
> So in my earthly house I am,
> To that I hope to be.

He told his mother of his thought when he went home. She sighed.

"Ah, I wish I could believe and love as Mary Coyne believes and loves, Ikey!" she said, changing the subject. "Your father is rather reconciled, but he says your conduct is a judgment on him for not keeping 'kosher.' He is afraid you'll marry Mary Coyne—you are talking so much about her of late. She ought to be a nun, everybody says. And he thinks marriage would spoil your chances of ever being a Cardinal—which, as you know, would be a great advertisement for the business."

Isaac kissed his mother.

"Let him look after Herman, and leave me to God, who is leading me. I am not less of a good Jew, mother, because I hope to be a good Christian; for the Messias has come not to destroy, but to fulfil. The time is coming, too, when we shall have to meet the floods of Antichrist at their high-

est; and men that are good will be submerged, if we do not see clearly and act rightly. Those who suffer will take to the sword."

"You speak in parables," said his mother listlessly.

"Look at Sandy McGill! You remember him as a frank, honest, bright young Scot. What has the tyranny of wealth and injustice made of him? Everybody believes that he killed Mr. Morton in trying to shoot Spracht. Nobody can prove it, and nobody wants to prove it. There's a sneaking hope in this peaceful community that some day he may get a good crack at Spracht, who is well protected in his evil-doing by the 'higher powers.' Our hope is that Trevanion may help to change all that. But what must come, mother, of a state of mind in a community that is so hopeless of the law that it hopes for murder?"

"You are horrible, Isaac!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Trevanion was not pleased with her son's marriage, but she did not tell him so.

"Mary Coyne will always be nearest to me. She has poetry in her, and there's more things than marriage in this world. What would I not do with my own poor daughter, if it wasn't for those Catholic Sisters—and me an Evangelical!"

Mary Coyne waited. Many times at the altar she repeated, after the priest: *"Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam*—Thou has opened new ways to me, my Lord! Thou hast taken me from prison and shown me the new world of infinite space and light. I wait upon Thy will."

CHAPTER XXI

AMY COYNE, as Mrs. Jack W. Morton, began to develop ambitions. It was remarkable how soon she took her color from her surroundings. In a few months after the death that had changed so many things in Orvisville, this young person had become what she called "classy." Jack's sister, now Mrs. Trevanion, had not "hit it off" with her, as she phrased it. Mrs. Morton herself had gone off to a sanitarium, then to Paris; and Mary Coyne, bewildered by the kaleidoscopic movements of life, was silent and unsympathetic. Mrs. Coyne, now removed to the Cheshire Arms (a new and unnecessary apartment house in a town where there was plenty of room for houses with gardens), was the recipient of her woes. Mrs. Coyne lived in five small rooms, for which her daughter paid the rent. Mary occupied one of the rooms, and contributed to the support of the family with generosity. She was now engaged with Madeline in the business of supplying ladies with garments of the latest fashion. Mrs. Welterman had gone into the business with energy. Madeline had ideas, and the economic instincts of her Norman ancestors showed themselves very often.

"It's too awful," Mrs. Jack Morton confided to her mother, "the way Jack's sister treats me!"

Mrs. Coyne, in a rather over-trimmed black frock, was administering tea to her afflicted daughter. The little parlor of the flat was much

smarter than the old one had been. Amy had induced her mother to get rid of most of the old furniture. Trevanion's piano, draped with Bulgarian-striped silk, remained. The rest of the room was all enameled furniture and purple cushions, with fringed portières to match. All these things were the gift of the bride.

"Jack's sister seems to control everything. Such an outrageous will I never heard of—never! She's got a two-thirds vote in everything, and my poor Jack is treated like an idiot. The rest of the family doesn't seem to count. Jack gets only two thousand dollars a year until he's twenty-six; and unless he goes back to college for a year, at least, he gets only two thousand five hundred until he's thirty."

"Dear, dear!" observed her mother sympathetically.

"You may well say *that!*" continued Amy, watching the large diamond in a hoop that glittered with a combination of turquoises and sapphires around her wedding ring. "Two thousand a year, and my living as a sort of a college widow between here and New Haven! Two thousand a year! And after the sacrifices I have made!"

"Giving up your education and your graduation dress and all that!" sighed her mother. "I often wonder whether any man is worth it—except your father, of course."

"Mother" (Amy's voice took a petulant tone), "I wonder that you can talk like that. *You* haven't lost anything. I'm sure you'd be living in the old house, from hand to mouth, if I hadn't

married Jack, and touched his sister for an allowance for you. I'm sure I'm doing my best for you—so's Jack. And if I live, the boys shall leave this nasty common school and go to Groton, with the children of their own class. That's where Jack went. It's a terrible handicap to me for Mary to be going over to New York to that dressmaking place."

"Nobody knows it, Amy. There's a beautiful brass plate on an ebony-colored door, with just the simple letters, 'Madame Madeline,' that's all. That's what was decided on. Madeline was determined to do the thing as stylishly as possible."

"Yes; she consulted me," said Amy, with a languid air. "She wanted to make it *'couturière'*; she said it was better French; but I just told her that society wouldn't stand for it—though, to tell you the truth, I didn't in the least know what it meant. And Trevanion! He is just a beggar on horseback. He's stopped poor Jack's running bills; and if I hadn't got these jewels and my furs and a few frocks just after we were married, I'd be in rags! I don't know what I'll do for clothes after I go out of mourning. I often think," Amy concluded pensively, raising a monocle to her left eye, "that it's better to be poor and have no position than to go on suffering as I suffer—unable to hold the place in society that belongs to Mrs. Jack Wadsworth Morton."

"Your family is as good as anybody's in America. The Salem——"

"I don't quite like the Salem witch story. It might make some people laugh."

"What's there to laugh at?" demanded Mrs.

Coyne, flushing indignantly. "Those witches suffered just as much for their country as George Washington or Roger Williams."

"No witches in mine!" said Amy positively. "If your witches were old settlers, we'd talk about the *Mayflower,* and let it go at that. You can't make witches respectable, no matter what you say about them. Just stick to the *Mayflower,* mother; and if you go into the 'Daughters' I'll pay the fee. Or perhaps the Colonial Dames would be better. I'll have a talk with some of the Revolutionary sharps about it. I'm glad my mother-in-law has gone for a time. We have her suite. She didn't even kiss me. She just cried, and said the only consolation she had was that I wasn't the chorus girl Jack had been in love with last year at New Haven. I tell you, mother, many a time I've just had to hold my temper in, and remember I was a lady——"

"And a clergyman's daughter, Amy!"

"You'll never let me forget that, mother! Now I must go!" Amy drew from her crêpe-draped silver bag a powder-puff and mirror. "I've a little quiet bridge ahead with some friends on The Hills. Tell Mary I was here. I hope you've got over her joining the Catholic Church."

"I shall *never* get over it—not as long as I live! Mrs. Coyne took out her handkerchief. "Life will never be the same. How can I ever join with her in singing 'Jerusalem the Golden,' or 'Lead, Kindly Light,' or any of those old Protestant hymns! And such an example to the boys! All her ancestors look down——"

"I fancy that, if they're witches, they probably

look up," giggled Amy. "Oh, never mind! Don't be a bigot, mother. It would be better for my position if Mary would go and be a nun—dressmaking is so vulgar! I don't object to incense myself; and Jack says that, if you must pay your pew rent, the Catholic Church gives you more for your money than any other—and you're not bored with sermons. Jack has some Catholic friends, you know. Don't be a clam! Nobody bothers much about religion now. And I'm sure father wouldn't have minded. He was awfully broad himself."

"Amy!"

"Oh, I look at these things from the point of view of a woman of the world! Good-by, dear!"

After she had gone, Mrs. Coyne remained for an instant as one prostrated. She recovered suddenly, and rushed to the window to watch her elegant daughter's progress down the street.

"It can't be little Amy!" she wailed—"my own little Amy! If she wasn't such a credit to the family, I'd like to take her back to my arms as a tiny, tiny little baby. She'll never be *that* again!"

The mother was right. Amy had progressed; and the progress was as amazing to Mary as it was disconcerting to the mother. She had grown up in a single night like "Jack's bean-stalk," as Mrs. Trevanion said. Mrs. Trevanion was the only person to whom Amy appeared in a humorous light. To Madeline she was ridiculous; to Mary, tragical. Mary had reached that stage in her spiritual life where most frivolous things were tragical. She had found great peace of heart in the Church, but, so far, very little comfort. She

could not think of Trevanion without a pang. The pang was not of envy; and, strange to say, not of love; for she had learned that she loved but one person in the world with an unreserved love, and that was the frivolous and ambitious Amy. Trevanion, as mayor of Orvisville and the husband of the brilliant Molly, scarcely interested her. He was a different man; but the old wound, that smarted whenever she was not at work or at prayer, was caused by the fact that the Trevanion of her dreams had never existed. She saw that now. If she had married him, she would have suffered a terrible awaking. A man who could so easily transfer his affections would have made her wretched.

One evening Mrs. Trevanion, knitting in her cozy kitchen, looked at Mary for a long time in silence.

"You're glad you're quit of my son," she said suddenly.

Mary was startled and horrified.

"I've told you before this, that we Welsh have the second sight."

"Oh, Mrs. Trevanion, how can you!"

"Well, Mary, there's no use in denying it. My son's a big man, and he's got it in him to be bigger yet, and he's the best son that ever lived; but he hasn't the 'spark' in him. He is like his father's family—they're Cornish. He has what I hoped he'd never have—riches and power; not power over himself, but power over others. You're thinking that if you had married him you would have found him out and been disappointed, because 'tis the 'spark' you want in a man, too. It's

something—you can't say what it is. It isn't a reasonable thing. It doesn't pay the grocery bill of a Saturday night, and it doesn't buy a new spring hat; but to women like you and me 'tis more than *that.* It's the feeling that your man would do a generous thing, if it left him penniless; that he'd stick to his dreams of doing the right thing to the bitter end. Knowing this, you wouldn't mind poverty with him. Over at home, when I was a girl, I once read a Life of your Benjamin Franklin; and a fine man he was, in his way. When he was young and poor some rich men tried to force him to do what he thought was not right, so he asked them to supper, and the supper was only oatmeal cake and water. They could not eat what Franklin ate. 'You can't force a man to do anything, if he's content with food like this.' That's what a woman like you would be glad to hear her man say; but I do not think that my son would ever have the courage to say it. I think none the worse of him for that, because" (a twinkle came into the old woman's eyes) "he's my son; but a wife asks a thousand times more of a husband than a mother does, and very often she gets it. And I'm thinking, Mary, that if you had married my son, you'd have been happy enough; but it was not to be. I'm disappointed—though Molly's a nice girl, and I think she likes me. And she's no snob. She's never ashamed of our small way of living, though I'll not say the same of her husband."

"You do him injustice!" cried Mary. "Oh, Mrs. Trevanion, wasn't he proud and happy that you kept everything so bright and clean and nice?

I've heard him say *that* a hundred times. 'If we can only have a house like mother's!'"

Mrs. Trevanion looked pleased.

"I know that; but the luxury about him is changing him. I can't say I blame him. It's hard to live in marble halls without getting a taste for them. And he's never been used to them. Now, Molly wouldn't care. She'd practise on her violin, and listen when she wasn't practising to the boiling of my tea-kettle on the old kitchen stove here, and regret no silk cushions and electric bells. But he has been so long without these luxuries that he doesn't know their value: he overrates them. I know my son, and I'm proud that he is what he is—just like his father—but I wouldn't want to be that way myself. In truth, Mary, I think it's a good proof of the immortality of our souls that, no matter how much we love a person, we don't want to be him or her."

"It is true," Mary said, her face brightening. "It never struck me that way before. But," returning to the charge, "I do not believe your son is capable of being ashamed—"

"Oh, not of *me!*" Mrs. Trevanion smiled. "I know that. You see, if I was an Englishwoman and dropped my *h*'s, or an American and said 'ain't,' and tried to be cute by using slang, he'd be ashamed of me quick enough; he'd die sooner than show it. But I'm a Welshwoman. We Welsh—at least the Welsh from my part of the country—are never third-rate. We've a natural education." Mrs. Trevanion laughed. "There's some of the Irish that are the same way, but it wouldn't do to tell them so. They're a proud

and vain race, with the souls of fairies in them. In Wales we say that you've got to baptize an Irishman three times before you get the soul of the fairy out of him. My boy, like most men of to-day, puts a great deal of value on the things of the earth. He's never had the fairy soul, but he's a dear boy for all that. I can't help pitying you, Mary, for the good man you've lost; and him for the good lass he's lost."

Mary's clear skin reddened. She was embarrassed for an instant.

"And if you were only a little jealous or a little envious of Molly Trevanion, I'd be better pleased with you. 'Twould be more human like."

"Oh, Mrs. Trevanion, you do not mean that!"

"I do," returned the old Welshwoman. "As for me, I'll never forgive you if you marry another man."

Mary went to the kitchen table to prepare the invalid's "bit of supper"—a sweetbread.

"There's no fear of that," Mary said. "I never think of marrying now. I've no time for it, what with worrying about little Amy——"

"Poor little Amy!" Mrs. Trevanion's tone was sarcastic.

"Don't!" said Mary softly. "She's the one thing I love on earth with all my heart."

Mrs. Trevanion frowned, and silently watched Mary as she prepared to make a most delicious tidbit for the poor old man upstairs. Better that Mary should waste herself on a stupid husband than on that foolish, unimprovable "peahen, Amy," she thought.

"Well, your religion doesn't seem to be giving

you much comfort," she said aloud, not daring to attack Amy.

"Comfort?" Mary went on with her work deftly, before she spoke.

"You're mighty slow about answering," said Mrs. Trevanion sarcastically.

"It's because I'm religious," said Mary. "You see, my first religious business is to do every bit of my work well. This sweetbread is my work now. In honor of the Blessed Virgin, who did her housework well, I must make this as perfect as possible. I couldn't distract my mind from mixing the cream by answering you."

"You're a born simpleton, Mary!" Mrs. Trevanion raised her hands in horror. "No, you weren't so simple before you became a Roman. It's only since that I can't understand you!"

"No, I suppose not. You see, I've found peace among the better things of life. I used to hate all drudgeries, all tiresome small pieces of work —the long stretches of plain sewing, for instance. I shunned them when I could. The drapery and the copying of pretty effects I loved. But now I've learned that I must fulfil my life by doing each little thing perfectly—not for the sake of the little thing, but for the sake of—well—of God, who puts the little things in our way."

Mrs. Trevanion was impressed, but she would not have admitted it for worlds.

"It's blasphemy! It's not evangelical!"

Mary smiled.

"I'm telling you the truth. The Church—I've been led step by step—helps me to do all the tasks of the day better and better, to take what comes

with gratitude and cheerfulness. And some day I'll get the grace to quit worrying about Amy."

"As you've got the grace," Mrs. Trevanion exclaimed, "to stop worrying about my boy!"

"That's it!" said Mary promptly.

Mrs. Trevanion laughed out loud.

"I'll have to think you over, Mary," she said after a pause. "You're like a hard passage in the Bible."

The perfect sweetbread was carried by Mrs. Trevanion to her "man"; and then Mary, waiting until she came down for news of the invalid, said good-by. She had enjoyed her work; but it required all her newly found philosophy of life to think of Madeline's atelier without utter distaste; and she must return to it in the morning.

CHAPTER XXII

MADAME MADELINE'S atelier was a model of simple elegance. From the moment you entered the hall and faced a gray and green tapestry, before which stood two silver tripods, holding pots of exquisite red camelias, you were made to feel that you were in the abode of Taste. Then came the two salons, stiff, correct, with nothing in them but long mirrors, pink and white chairs, and subdued light. Here Madame Madeline ruled. To see her softly moving about, modestly clothed in the latest "confections," was a lesson in polite indifference, tempered by gentle interest.

The beginning had been good. Mrs. Welterman had been generous, practical, and interested. She learned some points in advertising from her husband; and Madeline had a small clientele of rich people, who wanted the newest style at the lowest price. Madeline was clever enough to know that, while her clients would no longer talk of her as "the little French dressmaker," nameless and valuable, they would speak with pride of "Madame Madeline"; and yet for a time they would be unwilling to pay for the difference in money represented by the little dressmaker's rise to the dignity of "Madame Madeline," with an atelier of her own. For a period, at least, she must gather customers and forego profits. Still, Mrs. Welterman was reasonable; she did not expect seven per cent on her money until the second

year, which really meant only three and a half, since the first year was without any interest at all.

Mary, in the workroom, found the business of keeping down expenses rather tiresome. She had a dozen assistants. She knew just what to do, so far as her own work was concerned; and she turned out dresses which Madeline, in the presence of the public, called *ravissants,* but which in homelike English conversation were styled "A No. 1." The management of Mary's assistants bothered her. If a girl looked tired, she was much inclined to take her work on herself and let the fatigued one rest.

"Adieu, Madame!" Madame said sweetly to a stout old lady who had just escaped almost suffocated from a new ball gown, which she had been persuaded into buying. "Now, Mary Coyne," she continued, dropping abruptly into English, "I'll not have it! You've let Mazie Verney play on you again. She's out at dances nearly every night, and we've got to pay for it. Because a girl looks tired and ill when she comes to work, it doesn't mean that she's sick—always. It often means late hours and dissipation."

"These girls that work all day must have some amusement. They seldom get a day off except Sunday——"

"Tant mieux!" interrupted Madeline. "They'd waste the time, if they had it, on moving pictures and in dancing, and so on. Work is really the best thing for them. Mrs. Montford Grace's dress isn't done, just because you let Mazie Verney drawl along with that waist."

"She looks so tired."

"I know her! She's up at all hours. She can't take our time in that way. Just ask her yourself. She is truthful, I must say. Running as we are, short-handed, to save expenses, we can't afford to have our profits cut down by these young persons' amusements. Do you see the point? You'll have to keep her up to time."

Mary saw the point reluctantly.

"You mean that I ought to scold her?"

"Mary!" Madeline assumed her most haughty manner. "Look at me! Now look at her the way I am looking at *you*."

Madeline's manner was what she called her "*grande dame* pose."

"But I couldn't," Mary said—"I couldn't have the heart to look at any human creature that way."

"Heart!" exclaimed Madeline. "If we're to pay Mrs. Welterman's interest with a little bit of the principal next year, we're to consider 'heart' a luxury during business hours. When she tries to appeal to your heart, just hand her the ice-water pitcher—that's all I ask."

Mazie Verney was a tall, slim girl, with a pale complexion, very dark hair and eyes, with drooping lids, and a mouth that drooped, too, at the corners sulkily. She wore a carefully repaired black frock and a white linen collar of the prevailing fashion.

"Miss Verney," Mary began, as the young women were going home, "a moment, please!"

"Yes, Miss Coyne."

"You're falling behind in efficiency, and I'm afraid it's because you stay out too late."

Mary flushed: she felt that she was managing this affair tactlessly.

"Am I?" Mazie Verney's eyelide raised themselves, and her eyes darkened, lessening the deep shadows, by lessening the contrast under them.

"You ought not to go to dances so much."

Mazie Verney put on her coat and hat before replying.

"Do you expect me to be a machine? Do you expect me to slave here all day, and stick in a little, stuffy hall room all night?"

Mary was disconcerted.

"I have no right to meddle with your private affairs——"

"Then why do you do it, Miss Coyne?"

"In your own interest."

"Nonsense! I do not want to be rude, Miss Coyne, but you know that isn't true. You simply want to get more work out of me. My interest is nothing to you."

Mary blushed furiously.

The girl clasped the lock of her lunch box and moved toward the door.

"It can't be good for a young girl like you to be going out to so many dances."

"It amuses me," answered the girl. "It makes me forget the hopeless drudgery of my life. If I had the talent of Madame Madeline or your gift of designing, I might think it worth while to work hopefully; but I'll be a sewing girl at nine dollars a week all my life, and grow old at

it if I can't marry. But that's not your business. As for dancing not being good for me, I've only to say that I go among decent people in a quiet way, and whether I get good or bad out of it all depends on myself. If you say that you object to my late hours because I'm made too tired to sew at full speed, say so; but don't put your objection on the ground of interest in me. Good-day!"

Mary was upset by this encounter. After the girl had gone, she thought of many apt retorts she might have made; her cheeks glowed, and she felt irritated and impatient. She walked down Fifth Avenue on her way to the Subway station, and she stopped at the cathedral. As she dropped her fingers into the holy water font, she heard a suppressed laugh close by. She turned, surprised. Near her stood a woman, slim, graceful, appearing very fashionable. Looking at her, Mary had a curious feeling that she had seen her before. The day had been dim; but suddenly the sunset filled the whole sky with a lemon color, and the light in the entrance to the church was apparently sifted of shadows.

"I know that you haven't been in the habit of doing *that.*" The woman spoke in a deep, soft contralto voice. "You're awkward about it. See! I can do it better than you, and I haven't got it quite right." And the woman, showing dark eyes beneath the brim of a big hat, crossed herself rapidly.

"This is hardly the place to try experiments," whispered Mary.

"Oh, I'm not irreverent!" answered the

woman very earnestly. "Don't think that. I'm Bianca Capella, the actress, and I open next week in the 'Princess of Monaco.' I'm to be guillotined, and I haven't caught the trick of the business of crossing myself. I've come here to watch the people take holy water, and of course I noticed that you were awkward about it."

"Perhaps so. I'm a recent convert."

"Talk to me for a moment," said the woman in her exquisitely low voice. "We may walk up and down for a few moments. You can say your prayers afterward. That's my motor car waiting there; and that's a guarantee of respectability in New York, isn't it?"

There was something strange and interesting about the woman: Mary had heard of her occasionally. Bianca Capella passed for an important but eccentric actress. She was dark, with a clear olive complexion, eyes that seemed to flash or to glow with every word she uttered—restless, unpeaceful, passionate, but not unkind. She was like an apple-green reed with great volumes of soft dark draperies about the top.

Mary who was very direct and unsuspicious, made a genuflection, and followed this rather disquieting personage into the street. Madame Capella took her arm.

"Now, tell me, why did you look so devoted and peaceful when you entered the cathedral? It's a very nice cathedral, no doubt; but if you were looking at the great window in Notre Dame de Paris for the first time, you couldn't have looked more awed. You see, I am an actress, and I must know the *why* of things, and I always

judge people at first sight. I've got a hard part to create—the Princess of Monaco—and, though I'm rather fed upon Revolutionary plays, I must admit that this is interesting. She really died under the guillotine, you know; but the secret I want to get at is what made all these excessively proud and foolish people die so well. Lord! what fools most of them were! But when it came to die! And I want to know, too," she went on rapidly, "why people are Catholics to-day just the same as they all were in the old days."

Mary admired the perfect elocution that made the flow of words seem like a hundred distinct pearly drops.

"I can understand great sinners throwing themselves at the feet of some saint or confessing to a kind priest, but the ordinary person like——"

"Like me, for instance," said Mary, with a little smile.

"Well, like you!" Bianca Capella spoke without a smile. "That's the reason I accosted you. You seemed just a nice, ordinary person who ought to be singing 'Beulahland' in some ordinary Methodist church. You're out of place in the thrilling, passionate Catholic Church."

Mary laughed.

"I'm afraid you've only read about the Catholic Church in plays."

"No, no!" exclaimed Bianca, walking more rapidly. "You see, I'm a Jewess by descent—a Spanish Jewess—but I haven't any religion. If I could lie like a child in a mother's arms, if I could submit my intellect——"

Mary had raised her head a little when

Madame Capella had labelled her as just an "ordinary person." It is one thing to admit that you are an ordinary person, in the faint hope of being contradicted, but quite another to have your status abruptly settled for you.

"If I could only stifle the questions of my intellect, and imprison my mind, I should be a Catholic."

"But are you quite sure," said Mary demurely, "that you have an intellect? Grand actresses, you know, are rarely intellectual."

Madame Capella stopped short and laughed. Her laughter was the most natural thing about her.

"Well, you *are* a cat!" she remarked. "Abe says that I have no more intellect than a wooden Indian. But Abe (that's my husband) is jealous of my brain. But you *are* a cat!" and she laughed again. "Seriously, Miss, what's your name?"

"Coyne."

"Seriously, Miss Coyne, why do people of all kinds go in there at all hours of the day, and seem to lose themselves in Something as 'the dewdrop slips into the silver sea'? Let us turn back. I must give you a chance to say your prayers. But why? Oh, I who have been tempted" (she dropped into a beautiful sepulchral tone)—"I who have sinned—I would give the world to pour out the truth to a priest in a confessional." The voice became clear and sincere. "Yes, I would give the whole world. Oh, you can't understand what I mean!"

They had reached the portal of the cathedral.

"I understand," said Mary, growing pale.

"You have never committed a great crime. I have!"

"Hush!" said Mary. "As we shall probably never meet again, I will say to you that I have had murder in my heart—and worse."

She disappeared into the growing gloom of the great building.

"Murder!" Madame Capella looked after her a moment, and then entered the waiting car. "Murder!" she repeated—"murder!"

The car sped swiftly uptown. Bianca Capella's eyes glowed and her face grew paler.

"Murder," she repeated, "and worse! She must have meant suicide. And yet she is calm! She looks as innocent as a white violet. And yet she can pray! I must see her again."

Impulsively, she stopped the car; the chauffeur sped into a quiet side street, and expressed his obedience through a speaking tube.

"I must find that girl *at once,* Dupré! Follow her!"

The chauffeur, accustomed to the strange moods of his mistress, remained quiescent and uncomprehending. She realized how hopeless it was to think of finding the unknown girl.

"To the theater!" she ordered. "I shall not dine to-night. You can go back to the hotel and say to my husband that I can not be seen until after the third act." Then she leaned back and thought of the people she had seen going into the cathedral—all with the same reverent look. "There's a Freemasonry among these people,

and I am on the outside of the circle. I *will* find out this secret."

Arrived in her dressing-room in the Renascence Theater, she rushed to the mirror and began to cross herself with rapidity.

"Lan' sakes!" said her dusky maid, her lower lip hanging in amazement—"lan' sakes! You act as if yo' was tryin' to frighten off devils, Miss Leipsiger!"

"I am, Dinah—I am!" answered the soft contralto voice.

"I'm glad there's plenty of time before the first call," said Dinah, "to frighten a whole mob of 'em off. I say, Miss, who has conjured you? I reckon there's a mighty lot of people jealous. You heard the calls last night, and no end of buckets! I 'low you was fine when you died in the last scene. I never seed you die that way before. You just clawed the sofa and expired beautifully."

"I try to die in a new way every night," answered the actress. "It is more interesting." She was childishly pleased by praise or interest, and even Dinah's was not unwelcome. "You may take that old pink blouse of mine, with the green pearls, Dinah."

"Lan' sakes!" said Dinah, delighted. "I reckon they ain't no devils left in *you!*"

"You are wrong there, Dinah. Nobody knows what devils there are in us but ourselves."

"Lan' sakes!" said Dinah. "I don't hold with that. If you don't speak about 'em to other people, how can you know they are devils? They must be recognized."

"I've nobody to speak to," said the actress. "I wish I had."

"There's your husband, Mr. Leipsiger: he's all right!"

"He wouldn't understand. Hurry up, Dinah! I want to be ready very early. And don't talk!"

"Lan' sakes!" returned Dinah. "I ain't talkin'. I'm just givin' good advice."

* * * * *

Mary Coyne was rather shocked as she recalled, on her way home, her incautious words to the strange woman—the famous actress, Bianca Capella. Everybody knew that she was the wife of the theatrical manager, Mr. Abraham Leipsiger; but the world preferred to pretend to believe that she was unmarried. Mary, wedged into her seat in the car by a stout woman with a basket, reflected that she could never help telling the truth. She blushed a little at the memory of her revelation, but she consoled herself with the opinion that she should never see Bianca Capella again. She closed her eyes and thought of the peaceful interior of the cathedral. What joy it was to be near such a sanctuary from the petty cares of the day! And how poor must the city be that had no such place of refuge!

The lights of the Orvisville station appeared; and, with a joyous bound of the heart, she thought of her home. Her mother was not the same; Walter and Hubert were not so simple-minded; but it *was* home, and Mary was very tired. How strange it seemed that she, no longer threatened with starvation, no longer afraid that her illness might reduce her dear ones to utter

poverty, should regret the days of anxiety immediately succeeding her father's death! Then poverty had faced her, but her dear ones were all her own.

As she turned the corner leading to Mrs. Coyne's apartment, she saw Trevanion going toward his mother's in a new, brightly varnished car. He was now manager of the Works, and consequently entitled to a car of his own. Brightly illuminated, his clean-shaven profile seemed hard and resolute. She, in the outer darkness, was not seen by him. And she saw him pass with no quickening of the blood, with no regret, with no envy. She laughed.

"What a lesson I have had on the value of desires!" she thought. "What a heartless being I am! Not so long ago, when he could not marry me, everything in life seemed to have ended. I was in despair, and he seemed to be in despair—and now!" She laughed again.

"*You,* Mary! I haven't heard you laugh very often."

It was Madeline who spoke.

"Oh, Madeline, you startled me! I'm just going home. Do come in and have some dinner with us. Mother will be so pleased!"

"Impossible! I waited after you had gone, intending to go home by the trolley; but I came out, after all, on your train. There was a wire asking me to see Mrs. Welterman at once."

"But you must eat first."

"Not at all. *L'appétit vient en mangeant;* and if I began to eat, I'd keep on. *Après* I will eat. I am as hungry as a wolf."

"I wonder what she wants?"

"I can not say. Oh, I'm always afraid of things! We're too prosperous."

"Nonsense! Don't be superstitious. God will see us through. And, Madeline, no matter what happens, I'm with you."

"Perhaps I'm only nervous or hungry, but she never wired before—so long!"

CHAPTER XXIII

GEORGE TREVANION and Arthur March had many consultations just after Mr. Morton's death. The result of the inquest had not been very clearly stated. The bullet wound had not figured in the wording of the coroner's verdict. Dr. Vernon, the Orvisville expert, had been more technical than clear. But public opinion decided that Morton had been murdered.

To everybody's surprise, Spracht had been named in the will, and for a large amount. Why? The Socialists of Orvisville answered, "For services rendered." And in a fit of bitterness, caused by the reproaches heaped upon him by his brethren of the Club, he said scornfully that he had "never permitted a strike at the wrong time." Interpreted, this meant that he had never encouraged an industrial revolt when such a movement was entirely against the interests of the capitalists. Trevanion knew just what he meant, and he understood why Morton had put Spracht's name into the will. For one thing, he had paid a debt to him and drawn his teeth for the future; for he knew that his son was too weak and his daughter too conservative to treat with so dangerous an enemy satisfactorily. As it was, Spracht left Orvisville and went to New York, where he engaged in various occupations, some of which Trevanion devoutly hoped would bring him within reach of the arm of the law.

As time went on and the autumn came again,

Trevanion and March became less intimate. In the first place, Trevanion's point of view began to change. Molly had inherited the major interest in the great canning industry, and she cheerfully transferred, as far as she could, all her power and her proxies to her husband. Trevanion soon discovered that he had other interests than those of her family to consider. There were many stockholders, and dividends were to be paid.

Mrs. Morton betook herself to Paris, where she had begun to lead as luxurious an existence as thirty thousand dollars a year would permit.

"I am an exile," she often said pathetically to friends on her celebrated "Thursdays" in her apartment near the Champs Elysées. "I am too poor to stay in my own country and to enjoy those pleasures of life that my husband gave me. I couldn't endure Orvisville, now that he is gone; and I will not be a pauper in New York."

Amy was speedily adopting this point of view. The bereaved widow was not allowed to overdraw her income; though there was a row when, in order to be an intimate friend of that exclusive lady, the Duchess de Lys-Rouge, she gave fifty thousand francs to one of that lady's pet charities, and tried to draw on the business for that amount in addition to her yearly income. Trevanion put down his foot, and Molly supported him in the firmness of his attitude.

Arthur March went on doing his work in the bookstore to the best of his ability, and hoping that Madeline would see her way clear to marriage. In the meantime he talked and worked

for what he thought to be the best interests of the working people in Orvisville.

Trevanion's term as mayor was in mid-career. So far, everybody except the professional "grafters" had applauded him. So far he had been fair. The affairs of the growing city were well managed. It was admitted that he was too rich himself, through his marriage, to use his power for his financial advantage. The paid uplifters thought at first that he would be an "easy mark," as Spracht sneeringly said, and they tried him with all kinds of fads. The veteran politicians patted him on the back, and waited, as a boy in the spring watches an apple tree that he dare not shake until the fruit is sufficiently ripe to fall; but they waited in vain.

The common and select councils (Orvisville possessed both) arranged their little bills, with concealed or unconcealed bits of profit for certain members; and these bills were promptly vetoed, and the reasons as frankly given to the public. Carlin was shocked and silent. The Socialists were forced to admit that the mayor was just. He acted without fear or favor, and actually reduced the supply of water of some of the splendid houses on The Hills, because their owners, in the dry spell, filled swimming pools and kept their fountains in the gardens going all day long, while the poorer part of the town was obliged to walk for blocks in order to fill buckets from the river or from old wells and cisterns. Trevanion was not beloved but he was respected. The only person who did not constantly imply that he "was a just man" was his wife. She smiled

when he was praised; but if anybody became too superlative she yawned politely. She spent hours at her violin practice.

"I am gaining time," she said one day to Mrs. Trevanion. "Life's a puzzle, and perhaps music will help me to unravel it."

About a month after her little son was born, Trevanion was with her in the dining-room on The Hills, one evening late in November—he heard her sigh. The dessert was on the table, and the servants had gone. Molly's increase in age had increased her beauty. In her soft white satin gown, with a necklace of small pearls, she looked the part of a charming young matron to perfection. The dining-room was so large that the round table, with the great bouquet of pink roses, and the sparkling silver and porcelain, was a brilliant disc in a lake of gloom. A distant grate fire glowed; and the somberness of the room was only made more apparent by the occasional reflections of this glow on the great sideboards of dull black oak, carved in intricate designs.

"A sigh?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Molly, sighing again.

Trevanion looked very prosperous and self-satisfied. His wide surface of shirt bosom was adorned with two pearls much larger than Molly's, and he looked like a man who gave some thought to his toilet. He was not by any means the Trevanion of a year and a half ago, and he had developed a weakness for being called "Your Honor."

"The cook's good," said Trevanion playfully, "and you sigh!"

Molly smiled slightly.

"Oh, the household's perfect! That's why I sigh. *I* can't live by bread alone."

"Molly!" He spoke reproachfully. "You don't mean to say that love is lacking?"

"I wasn't saying anything," she returned petulantly. "I was only sighing and thinking that I shouldn't like the boy to grow up in such a well-regulated house."

"I have been thinking pretty often of late that he is very lucky to be born into it."

Molly looked carefully at the little gold coffee spoon, with the Morton crest engraved on it, before she replied. A frown rather spoiled her forehead, and her hand trembled. It was evident that she was controlling her temper.

"And," Trevanion went on, "we must fit him for his social position. I shall enter him at Groton at once."

"You talk like Amy!" Molly spoke impetuously. "What social position? We have no social position simply because we are rich. Our money ought to give us the power of living free of all the silly conventions which people make for themselves, and try to make real. We have no rank that is acknowledged by everybody. That sort of thing went out with the American Revolution. George Washington might have saved the aristocratic element in this country by having himself made Lord Mount Vernon; and Charles Carroll, down there in Maryland, might have been the Duke of Carrollton, or at least Sir Charles Carroll. But they didn't; and there isn't

any rank—so there's an end of it. Mrs. Coyne's Salem witches!" Molly laughed irritably.

"You've been reading history, Molly," Trevanion said; "and perhaps you know that all social position in this world is founded on money, as it was formerly founded on land. The king who had the largest domains in the Middle Ages was the most important. The knight so strong in lands that the sovereign was obliged to give him a tower or two, was *it*. Well, we people who are rich to-day are *it*, and no mistake."

"Let us have more light——"

Trevanion touched a button, and a flood of electric light poured from behind the softly tinted glass panels in the walls.

"Oh, I didn't mean *that* altogether, though it was rather gloomy! I was thinking that you've changed very much since we married."

"For the better?" He smiled, and looked into her thoughtful face.

"No, my dear—I must say it! You've become more like other men. And I—fell in love with you because you were different. Poor dad was brought up to look on great wealth as his own. If he got it without running against a law, it was all right. You fought for money: you ate your opponent as if you were a cannibal, or he ate you!" Molly laughed. "I always thought dad's views and practices in business were immoral. But, then, he was dad; he had had a bad bringing up. We argued over things many times. Mamma simply spent money. She owed it to her social position, she said; and dad didn't mind. Ah, nobody but I knew how good he was at heart!"

She sighed painfully. "But we're different. I don't propose that my boy shall be a mere enjoyer: he must do some good in the world, and he can *never* grow if he is brought up in *this!*" She made a gesture of contempt toward her father's famous Flemish oak, and the dim portraits of various ancestors on the walls.

Trevanion looked admiringly at her flushed and vivid face.

"If you had ever known poverty, Molly," he said; "if you had ever known what it is to fight for everything you want or even need, you wouldn't despise the luxuries about you."

"I don't know a stronger or a better woman than your mother, and she has never known luxuries."

Trevanion sighed in his turn.

"If my mother had had advantages——"

"Advantages!" Molly spoke impatiently. "I call that kind of talk cant—a kind of American cant. A girl who rushes through college without acquiring any strength of character will turn up her eyes pathetically at the thought of the energetic and capable mother who made all her clothes for her, who starved for her, who exhausted her brain in a thousand expedients for her—who had no 'advantages.' Think of my mother! I love her immensely, but I can see how a luxurious life would have hampered her, if she had been forced to work for those she loved."

"I don't know about that."

Molly arose and walked to the long window.

"Oh, dear!" she said. "Oh, dear!"

Trevanion crossed over to her, and took his arm in hers.

"Molly, don't worry.

> *I* take the goods the gods provide me,—
> Lovely Thais stands beside me!

But," he broke away from his gay tone, "where are your pearls? I never saw that meager little string before."

"Dad gave me these when I played in a school concert; it was an *air varié;* I remember. How pleased he was!" She laughed. "But he was sad that day, too; for he told me that it might be his last gift—he had heart disease. But mamma would never believe it. Poor dad! He knew his own troubles.—My pearls? Oh, I sold them!"

"Sold them?"

"I didn't intend to tell you." She turned around seriously. "You see mamma has bought a new diamond and ruby tiara; she says that it is necessary to her 'social position,' as she is going in January to the Minister's ball at Brussels." Molly gave a short laugh. "She sent the bill to me. It amounts to thirty-five thousand francs, so I paid for it with my pearls. I had to do that, or withdraw my annual subsidy to the hospital for the factory people and the consumptives' home."

Trevanion's face darkened.

"Your mother——"

"I will not hear a word said against mother. She is the child of her 'advantages.' And you are talking of your social position and *my* social position just as she talks of hers. My dear hus-

band, do you know that we have sixteen servants in the house, excluding the chauffeurs? Do you know that the upkeep of the place and the Bar Harbor house costs us fifty thousand dollars a year?"

"Well," answered Trevanion (a slight irritation in his tone was apparent), "we—you can afford it."

"No, we can't!" Molly spoke decidedly.

"The business is paying more."

"Thanks to you, yes—but by following the old methods which you once condemned. It was your condemnation of those methods that made me fall in love with you. And now——"

"Responsibilities force us to change our views," Trevanion answered uneasily.

"But not our principles."

Trevanion began to walk up and down the room. Molly silently watched him.

"Oh, by the way," he said suddenly, "I'm sorry you sold your pearls! We have a large dinner party to-morrow night. Welterman will want to talk over the new idea; and there are a lot of swells coming in, you know. Haven't you some jewels worthy of the occasion?"

"The boy—he is my jewel, as somebody said in the Roman history. I'll wear *him*." She laughed. "In fact, he's the only jewel I care for now. How well your mother would like to hear me say that!"

"Do be serious, Molly!"

"I *am* serious. Now, really, do you think that I can be induced to look on a *diner de luxe* as a great event? Whom shall we have? Old Welter-

man, a very noisy example of a noble race, aflame with greed; his wife, I admit, I respect; Jack and his Amy, both too silly to be really bad; the Weston-Jones, stockbrokers—he talking business, she automobiles and bridge; Reginald Haricourt, the young Englishman, whom the Weston-Jones have taken up because he puts 'Honorable' on his cards. Woolner, your political war-horse, who wants you to contribute to his campaign fund, can't come. But there are Flossie Worth, who *must* marry a rich man; and Agnes Ruxton —she is the only real *person* invited. Who else?"

"Oh, Leipsiger! Met him in New York yesterday. He said he'd like to meet you."

Molly held up her hands in horror.

"Now you have *done* it! Mr. Leipsiger is Welterman's brother-in-law; and his wife, Bianca Capella, the actress, detests her sister's husband. I should like to see *her*."

"But of course I couldn't invite him to bring his wife. You have never met her; and, besides, she never goes out to dinners. How can I know the secret enmities of all the people I ask to dinner?"

"I have a good mind to go over to your mother's and escape it all. You can say—oh, anything by way of excuse!"

"Our duties—our social duties!" he pleaded. "What would people think?"

"George!" She laughed. "You amuse me. Do you really think it is our social duty to give a dinner to those people? I can't believe that you are serious. If you will deceive yourself in this way, let us at least break the stupidity of the

occasion by having some good talk. Let us ask that Mr. March."

"Arthur March? I hardly think he is the kind of person one asks to meet the Weston-Jones. They're howling swells, you know—millionaires and all that."

"What makes Mr. March unfit for our dinners? Not long ago he was your constant companion. He is clever, and better in every way than that whiskey-drinking Weston-Jones. Frankly, George, you mean, I suppose, that Mr. March, being poor, ought not to be invited here to dinner, because we are rich, and both of us being *parvenus*—I being a few years older as a *parvenu* than you."

Trevanion folded his hands behind him and did not speak. Molly's speech cut him. It was true. The only barrier between him and Arthur March was March's comparative poverty. He was angry—extremely angry. The overturning of the screens we raise to hide our shams always makes us furiously angry.

"I do not believe March has ever worn an evening coat in his life."

"Possibly," said Molly coldly. "I intend to use my right as a hostess and ask him to dinner. You're not really a snob at heart, George," she added amiably; "and in time you'll get over these infantile symptoms of a common disease."

Trevanion went nearer the window to look out into the darkness. He could see the light in his father's bedroom, glaring under its green shade; it seemed far away.

"You're restless." He turned, having gulped

down several words which it would have been imprudent to say.

"Yes, I have been thinking much to-day and yesterday. I dropped into Father Cook's church to hear the Gregorian chant. That young Father Waldron made a short sermon on 'Our Duties,' and it rather upset me."

"If there was a good theater in this town," Trevanion grumbled, "or an occasional concert, there wouldn't be so much running to church and to speech-makings. That sort of thing makes people morbid."

Molly laughed.

"Let's talk seriously—but no! That will only irritate us to-night. Billiards will be better. Ring, George, and tell Jeffreys to uncover the table."

CHAPTER XXIV

MADELINE'S interview with Mrs. Welterman had cast a shadow on that young woman's rosy hopes—a slight shadow at first.

"Mary" (Madeline had just attired herself in a feathery pink dress, to try its effect on a customer she expected at four o'clock), "tell that girl to come quietly in with tea the moment I ring. If Mrs. Weston-Jones does not have her tea precisely at four o'clock she becomes quite impossible."

The two young women were in the little box of a room over the hall, where Madeline did her bookkeeping and consulted occasionally with her partner. I'm doing my best, and so are you (though you're too easy with the girls); and success is sure—if we don't go into bankruptcy."

"Why?" asked Mary, in open-eyed wonder. "I'm sure we work hard enough."

"Listen to the innocent!" exclaimed Madeline, raising her dainty hands, carefully gloved for the occasion. "You *are* simple, Mary dear! What is hard work without capital these days? Nothing! I have kept it from you as long as I could, but Mrs. Welterman may be obliged to desert us."

"Oh, Madeline!"

"Yes." Madeline's look became less cheerful. "Her husband wants all the money he can grasp for the new department-store venture—a building with thirty-four stories, and with an aeroplane for an elevator, I suppose." Madeline

laughed again bitterly. "Well, we'll just have to go on as if nothing had happened. I expect to secure a rich customer to-day—Mrs. Weston-Jones. She's heard from somebody at my old place that 'Madame Madeline' is clever and cheap. She's the kind that goes about telling of 'my little dressmaker in Paris,' and imposing upon poor girls like me. Oh, well, she'll advertise us, anyway!"

A bitter tone came into Madeline's voice—very different, indeed, from those dulcet accents she used in business. "In business," she often said, "I use Sœur Pélagie's voice; at home I lapse into my own. There's one thing you could do, Mary," she remarked timidly. "You might ask George Trevanion to lend us some money."

"Oh, I couldn't—I really couldn't!" Mary's color came and went, and she raised her eyes imploringly.

"Listen, Mary!" Madeline spoke fervently. "When you're in business you must be prepared to do almost anything to keep afloat. And think what depends on it! Unfortunately, we've gone into debt on the strength of Mrs. Welterman's money. If she'd only stand to us, our credit would be good until we could float ourselves. And, oh, Mary, I can't drag Arthur into it! He's on some of our notes, and you know what that means if we fail. I was never miserly—I never cared for money for money's sake; but I feel as all French people feel—that I ought to bring something to my husband, especially when he is a hard-working man like Arthur. You weren't brought up that way, but it's in my blood to be

different. I think a wife ought to bring something for the home-keep. And I hoped I'd make a little out of the business, and then marry Arthur, and leave you to run it, if you cared to hold on. I wanted too much." Madeline's mood changed. "And the good Lord sees that perhaps. Oh, I hear the steps of that Mrs. Weston-Jones! Some powder, Mary! Trevanion might save us."

"Oh, I can't!"

"You're in love with him still."

"Madeline!" Mary's eyes blazed.

Madeline laughed.

"I just wanted to find out. Now I see, as you've almost forgotten him, it won't be so hard to ask him."

"Madeline!"

But Madame had already entered, and Mary heard the echo of her best imitation of Sœur Pélagie.

"Madame Weston-Jones! *Enchantée! Ravie!*"

Mary, left to herself, stood, silent and unhappy.

"If it isn't one thing, it's another," she reflected, echoing one of her mother's best-beloved phrases. How could she ask Trevanion for such a favor? She went cold at the thought of it. What would his wife think? For, after all, it was *her* money she would be forced to ask for. And he might be obliged to ask *her*. Even to save herself from a limitless debt, even to save Madeline and Arthur March, how could she bring herself to do it? But there was no time for thought. For the moment, at least, work would

set her free from her perplexity. She must go into the sewing-room and direct the girls.

Still, in spite of her occupation, there were moments during the morning when the thought of Madeline's suggestion recurred, and made her heart heavy. But Mary had two qualities: it seemed impossible for her not to tell the truth, and equally impossible for her not to take an interest in the people around her. To save time, Madeline had arranged a little lunch room in the house. Mary noted Mazie Verney, pale and heavy-eyed. She was a pretty girl, intelligent-looking, quiet, and apparently well-mannered. Mary asked her to come to her behind a screen. Madeline had gone home with Madame Weston-Jones for some further measuring or other mystery, and Mary had a vacant place at her table.

"She's in for another scolding!" whispered a girl nearest the screen. "A little more of this sort of thing and she'll get the sack."

But Mary had no intention of scolding anybody. In asking Mazie Verney to have tea with her, she was obeying an impulse of instinctive interest, and trying to gain a respite from her own perplexities. Besides, she was too wise to scold anybody on a social occasion.

"I know what you are going to say, Miss Coyne," Mazie began. "But it's no use. I'm doing my work very well, and I don't think you've any reason to find fault."

"I don't intend to find fault." Mary smiled. "I intend to make you eat this toast, which looks very good. Madame Madeline had an inspira-

tion when she induced the black cook next door to serve us with such decent food."

The girl's face ceased to look intense and anxious.

"It *is* good. It's very nice of you to ask me. I thought you were going to 'rag' me for being out so late. But if you had to lead my life, you just couldn't stay at home evening after evening, in a little hall-room, with no fire and no light except a flaring gas jet. I've got to go somewhere, and I like to dance. A girl gets sick of the 'movies.' They're so expensive, too, unless you have steady company that you can depend on."

"Now you must try some of this tea. But tell me about yourself."

"There's nothing to tell. I was brought up on a farm by an aunt, who just made me drudge when the law didn't make me go to school. Country life? None in mine! Up at six, and mobs of farm hands to feed, and no leisure. Aunt was too stingy to have a telephone put in, and never went anywhere, except to church once a month. You see, I had learned to sew well, and I had a good eye for color and that sort of thing; so I left the farm and came to New York. Except that aunt had to get two hired girls in my place, she didn't think that she had any reason for missing me, and she told me so in the only letter she ever wrote me. Uncle, my mother's brother, said he'd make it easier for me, if I'd come back. But, even if he could do it—which he couldn't—it was horribly lonely on the farm. The only amusement was a sermon and singing hymns to a cracked melodeon once a week—we

didn't even have summer boarders. Now, Miss Coyne, you see why I try to enjoy myself. I just had to pick up what friends I could, and have a good time. And there's no harm in it."

"Don't you think that you would be happier in the country?"

"Now, Miss Coyne, don't talk that 'back-to-the-farm' business to *me!*" The girl was always at her ease with Mary, but constrained and almost servile with Madeline. "You people who have never lived in the country and who never go there to live yourselves, are always talking about the country, as if it was a paradise. I must say that if we knew some pleasant people and had a telephone, and if I had been taught to find interests on the farm outside of the work——"

"But why not in the work itself?"

"It was drudgery—with aunt nagging about the pies in the oven and the pies that weren't in the oven. And then sometimes we were short-handed in the winter—did you ever try to feed stock in a blizzard? And so I came here to get some amusement out of life, and I'm getting it."

"And the future?"

"I don't think of the future. Of course I can't save anything. It takes seven dollars a week for my board and necessaries, and that doesn't always include carfare. If Madame Madeline didn't give us the privilege of getting dress material at cost price, I'd have to go in rags. I make my own clothes, naturally. You see, I'm well brought up. My uncle and aunt had gone to good schools, and I think I speak English well;

but I was never really taught to take an interest in anything."

"Religion?"

Mazie Verney laughed.

"That's gone out of fashion in our part of the country. Church members are not so many as they used to be. We hardly paid our old minister and his wife—mighty good people they were, too—enough to keep them. I don't know why I'm so frank with you, unless it's because I think I ought to try and make up for having been so rude the other day. You mustn't think that I'm bad: I know how to take care of myself, but I can't live without amusement. I hate my work, but I must exist. It's all nonsense to say that girls go wrong because they're poor; that they're forced to do things they shouldn't do because they don't earn enough. I can always earn more than I do with you by going out as a cook. I can cook well; but then I wouldn't have my evenings to myself; I couldn't go out and stay as long as I liked. If I were rich I'd go out often, and do nothing but amuse myself, as most rich ladies do. Money wouldn't change me. So there you are!"

Mary was silent.

"What would you like to do?"

"Nothing," said the girl frankly. "I *hate* all work."

"If you had a house of your own?"

"It wouldn't be work then. You see, I never really had anything of my own. I'll be very honest with you. I'll do my work for you as well as I can, even let Madame Madeline drive me a little—I'm rather afraid of her. I've chosen my

way of living and I can't do anything better. To be sure, if I lost this place I'd be in a bad way; but I can always cook. I hear a lot about improving the conditions of working girls." Mazie laughed. "It tires me. To improve our condition, these uplifters will have to change us first. Thank you for the tea, Miss Coyne! I'll go to work now."

When Madeline returned, she took a few moments to give her impressions of Mrs. Weston-Jones to her partner.

"I took two of the Paris models with me—the new gowns. 'You will copy them,' she said, 'and I will wear them. It will be enough to make you famous. I shall tell everybody that Madame Madeline made them. It will get into the papers.' *Voilà!* Think of it, Mary! 'I will give you half price; but, for the *réclame,* you should let me have them for nothing.' These words the ancient witch addressed to me—to me! And she is wealthy—a millionaire! It is incredible. I raged in my heart. But I said I would think of it. Ah, Mary, life is horrible! I expect nothing from such a customer." And Madeline began to cry. "You *must* speak to Trevanion."

Just after six o'clock Mary went out alone; Madeline always remained an hour later, to look over the results of the day's business. The evening was clear and fine, and Mary's spirits arose for a moment as soon as she began to breathe the fresh air. After all, there must be some way out of this dilemma. She could not be reduced to the sacrifice of asking George Trevanion for help. It was natural that Madeline, in her anxiety,

should expect her to do it. It was a matter of life and death to Madeline, and a most serious thing for her, too. She could realize what the bondage of unpayable debt meant; it was a kind of industrial slavery she could very well understand. But to ask George Trevanion for help after what had happened! She turned sick at the thought. She had saved him from great annoyance, perhaps from worse, by taking the pistol, Madeline had said, in her argument; but this only made it more impossible for Mary to ask him to lend her his wife's money. There must be some way out.

One day recently, Madeline had asked Mary: "Do you really pray for the ordinary everyday things you want?"—"How else should I get them?" Mary had asked simply. Madeline looked rather shocked.—"We pray for our daily bread, don't we?" Mary added hastily. And now, walking toward the cathedral as usual, fearing more and more the terrible task proposed to her—that she must sacrifice her womanly pride, her maidenly sensitiveness, all those fine inexplicable qualities that form an exquisite nature—she prayed with all her might for a way out.

She had just turned into Fifth Avenue when a motor car shaved the sidewalk and stopped. The door opened, and a woman in lilac velvet and yellow fur dropped to the pavement.

"I've found you at last!" said a soft contralto voice.

Mary looked up. It was Bianca Capella, more vivid, more glowing than ever, and very much excited.

"Where did you come from?"

"From Madame Madeline's atelier, where I work." Mary could never avoid answering a direct question.

"And where are you going?"

"To the cathedral."

"I'll drive you there.—Dupré, the cathedral!"

And Mary was hustled very quickly by the muscular Madame Capella into the car.

"I hope I didn't hurt you, but I am determined you shall not escape. My grip is like steel. It must be. I don't know when I'll have to take a rôle that will suspend me from a bell rope for five minutes. You didn't think that an actress had to exercise her muscles, did you? Now I've found you!"

The car moved noiselessly.

"So you work—somewhere?"

"At Madame Madeline's. I design frocks and look after the sewing girls."

"Ah! And you make money? No? You looked troubled when I saw you. You are unhappy. You do not make money?"

"We shall make enough money, if we can keep going. But Mr. Welterman, whose wife's funds have enabled us to go on, obliges her to withdraw them; and, to tell you the truth, we are in a bad way. I was thinking of that when you saw me."

"Welterman? The pig! He is my brother-in-law," said Madame Capella softly. "He lives to make money. My sister is beautiful and gentle—an idealist, as one of her race should be. She loves art; she loves *me;* but he thinks of

nothing except the trough in Wall Street or somewhere. And you make costumes?"

"Madeline has real talent. We have turned out some really beautiful things."

Madame Capella fixed her eyes thoughtfully on Mary.

"I have found you. You will tell me many things I want to know. Our dressmakers are not good. The costumes for the 'Princess of Monaco' were dreadful. If I were not at my best in the part, the play would fall through. The colors sneer at one another. We are getting ready for a new play—'The Woman of Fate'—modern, in the latest fashions. Could your atelier——"

"Oh, Madame, we could do *anything!*" cried Mary; "only try us!"

"And we pay well. But if that pig of a brother-in-law takes his money away, your business will be ruined?"

"Yes," Mary replied, after a slight pause. "I don't believe we could go on."

"And of course my sister always takes the point of view of my big, noisy brother-in-law. She will probably take this advice and leave you to flounder out of debt as well as you can. She has good qualities—Nina!—but she can never stand up and oppose her husband. Her stupidity will ruin you, that's all. Do you think you could pull through with a little money?"

"I am sure we could," answered Mary eagerly. "It's only a question of paying for the fixtures and the installation. We should already be making a slight profit over running expenses, if these things were paid for."

"I'll help you!" Madame Capella turned a resolute face toward Mary. "I see it all! Welterman has asked Mr. Leipsiger over to dinner at Orvisville to-morrow night, to interest him in some scheme; and that unmentionable Spracht has been hanging around the hotel of late. He doesn't dare to come near the theatre. I'd scorch him."

"Spracht!" exclaimed Mary. "Do you know him? That horror!"

"Know him? Don't I know the story of Sandy McGill?"

A look of terror came into her eyes. Mary was amazed at the change in her. All her strength seemed to have gone in a moment.

"The world is very small, Madame Capella!"

"Small—and terrible! But, Miss Coyne, you should have the necessary money." The actress had recovered herself. "I will help. It will bring me good luck. I feel it. We actresses are said to be superstitious, but I am not. Nevertheless, there are certain things I *know,* and I know that you will bring me good luck. We are rich for the moment. 'The Princess of Monaco' is a great success. You shall have tickets. It is one of my great parts. I die well in it, and deaths are my specialty. They said that Mlle. Croizette died better than I; but she is really dead, and I am not. Do you know the history of the French Revolution?"

"Only here and there—the part about Charlotte Corday and——"

"Oh, she is not interesting! She was too pretty to have much temperament or even common-

sense. I could not act her. She and Madame Roland are not for *me*. But what I want to know is, why did those foolish aristocrats die so well? I like good deaths. *They* were mostly idiots—agreeable idiots. They deserted the King; they blundered whenever they could——"

"I am not so sure of that," said Mary. "I think their King deserted them; he certainly deserted the priests."

"Oh, that's another thing! But think how those great ladies died! Take the Princess of Monaco. She is about to be guillotined. She sees —*I* see—a priest in the crowd; he raises his right hand; her face is illuminated; you can't get that with a spot light, you have to be lighted up within—and she curtsies and dies, evidently happy. I studied much in that history, and it is always that way, except in the case of poor Madame du Barry. But she, poor creature, was different."

"I can understand."

"I wish I could!"

They were nearing the cathedral.

"What will you do when you reach the church?"

"Make my thanksgiving that I have met you, and that you have been moved to untie some terrible knots for us—for *me*."

"You trust me, then! But why do you say 'me'? Is it worse for you than for your partner?"

"Oh, yes—yes!" Mary answered this, obeying her usual impulse.

"You have more money to lose?"

"No—no! Oh, no! For me the money seemed

not to count. It was another thing—something I should have been obliged to say—to ask for." She shuddered.

"You will tell me sometime?"

"I will tell you sometime. Here we are!"

The car stopped.

"I shall go in, too. Tell me what to say. Tell me what the great ladies prayed every day of their lives, to make them die so nobly. Tell me, and I will say it; for I am very much afraid of death."

They had descended from the car, and stood on the sidewalk.

"Tell me, if you can," the actress said very humbly—"tell me and I will say it."

Mary looked into the intense eyes of the woman beside her. She still hesitated; there was something very mysterious, personal, even hidden, in her new belief.

"Well, I will tell you. These women had said every day of their lives, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.'"

Hand in hand they went into the soft-shadowed interior, and knelt where the tabernacle light fell upon them.

CHAPTER XXV

TREVANION began to have illusions. The great interests of the canning industry had increased enormously. The fortunate idea of making caviare from sturgeons in the River Delaware and of encouraging the growth of mushrooms in Minnesota had been made practical, and, as the taste for luxuries was growing, the agents of the syndicate considered the question of raising American truffles in order to "can" them! Trevanion's prosperity tended to convince him that he was the author of it. Molly did not encourage the impression, and therefore he was beginning to feel irritated at her lack of appreciation of his talents.

The coming dinner party—one of the first after the period of mourning—gave her no concern; whereas Trevanion was extremely nervous about it.

"I can't be bothered," Molly said, after several long discussions on the subject. "The servants are paid to do the thing well. Why do I have an English butler, if he can not settle on the wines, and all that? I drink only water, and you don't know Bordeaux from Burgundy; and as for the people, I've left a list of them on the telephone box. If you have too many women, just call up a man or two on that list; but if you have too many men, don't worry: let them go in with one another, only put the older ones first. I've

a long Mozart concerto to study, and a new thing by Ysaye. I really can't be annoyed. And any spare time I have I must give to baby."

Trevanion said nothing. It was better to say nothing on occasions like this; for Molly, though casual, could speak terribly to the point. He was, nevertheless, offended.

"I wish," he thought, not seeing the humor of it, "that I had married a wife who gave more attention to her social position."

He knew well that the dinner, which had been suggested by Welterman, meant something more than a mere meeting of persons prepared to be agreeable to one another for the moment. It meant the recognition of "His Honor, George Trevanion, the Mayor of Orvisville," as a factor in the success of great financial schemes. He was no longer to be regarded as the husband of Molly Morton, but as a person whose natural endowments and acquired experience had placed him on an equality with such Napoleons as Welterman, George J. Crowenshell Weston-Jones, and the great Abe Leipsiger. And into this ring of glory was to enter Arthur March, who had no sense of proportion—a clerk from the book shop, engaged to marry the daughter of a washerwoman, people said; and, worse than all, a bold speaker in very decent English on every possible subject.

Trevanion worried the butler to that extent that he almost gave notice.

"I 'ave offered thick and thin soup at dinner in the best 'ouses in England," the harassed dignity complained in the kitchen; "and now this

American bounder wants to tell me that thick isn't fashionable!"

As none of the servants paid the slightest attention to his directions, the dinner, in the materialistic sense, proved to be successful.

" 'Am!" the butler said. "Why, sir—of course, sir, we must have *mousse* of 'am! I know, sir, that Mr. Welterman and Mr. Leipsiger are 'ebrews, sir; but that mikes no difference among gentlemen, sir. Sometimes, we 'ad to privide fish things for Romans, you know, sir, who came to Lord Ennington's; but we always looked on them as un-English, sir. But, bless you, sir, 'ebrews of a good claws eat just like ourselves, sir. It's only 'igh Church people and Romans that gives trouble in the kitchen now, and they're rather foreign, you know, sir."

And thus one of Trevanion's gravest doubts was dispelled.

On the night of the dinner, Molly and he stood near the door of the drawing-room waiting for their guests.

Molly's white satin dress and the little string of pearls were entirely too simple for his taste. Looking at her, he again wished that she were equal to her opportunities. He knew that his own attire was irreproachable, and rejoiced in the knowledge.

"Mr. and Mrs. Weston-Jones!"

Molly, who had gone up to the open fireplace for a moment, turned to welcome the guests. Mrs. Weston-Jones crawled forward, swathed in purple and lace, and carrying a tiara of diamonds whose weight might have made a less robust

woman bend her head. Mr. Weston-Jones, carrying an enormous pearl in the center of his shirt bosom, kissed his hostess' hand very ceremoniously and, with a fixed and benevolent smile on his red face, said "How d'ye do!" to his host. Then he took up his position near the great wooden lion that guarded the right side of the fireplace, twirled his white mustache and smiled, while his deep-set eyes roamed over the tapestry of hunting scenes on the walls.

"Late seventeenth century," he said aloud. "Good stuff, Mr. Trevanion—worth a pot of money. I have some good Gobelins myself."

Trevanion smiled, and said "Yes"; but he resolved to ask Molly what Gobelins were. It couldn't be a mispronunciation of "goblin"; but he turned the idea to advantage by quoting,

The goblins will get you if you don't watch out.

At this Weston-Jones laughed consumedly.

"They will, too, if you buy too many and pay what the dealers ask. Mine cost fifty thousand dollars—those just inside the loggia."

"Oh, you witty man!" said Mrs. Weston-Jones to Trevanion. "You'll give my husband a fit. Dear me! Such a day! I've been playing bridge until it was time to dress—since half-past two. Oh, my dear Molly, what busy lives we American women lead! No rest: just social duties continually!"

"Mr. and Mrs. Welterman!"

Molly kissed Mrs. Welterman affectionately. Mr. Welterman shook hands with everybody, squeezing their fingers together with the gesture

of a playful bear. He was dark, whiskered, alert, and at the same time fat.

"I saw your name in the paper. You were at the opera last night? In your own box? Was the music good?"

"Listen to the man!" gurgled Mrs. Weston-Jones. "Who goes to the opera to hear music? One does it as one's duty; besides, I have heard 'The Master-Singer' fifty times."

"Exactly! Exactly!" responded Mr. Welterman. "I have often felt the same, too."

"Mr. Leipsiger!"

"Good old Abe!" murmured Mr. Welterman.

Mr. Leipsiger was tall, distinguished-looking, and even his clean-shaven face could not make him look like other people. The complexion was of a dead white—due, probably, to late hours. He looked keen and wise, and somewhat obstinate, but his dark eyes were really intelligent.

"Where is Bianca?"

"Bianca never goes out to dinner parties, Mrs. Weston-Jones, except in summer—when there are none. The rehearsals occupy her. She goes on in 'The Woman of Fate' when 'The Princess of Monaco' ends."

"What a fearful life!"

"It is the life of a great artist, Madame," said Mr. Leipsiger, evidently irritated.

"She is wonderful in 'The Princess of Monaco.'" Molly spoke so sincerely that Mr. Leipsiger looked pleased.

"I shall tell my wife," he answered.

"Tell his wife!" murmured Mrs. Weston-Jones. "I like that! Why, they fight like cats

and dogs most of the time, and yet when they're apart you'd think they were turtle-doves. By the way, do you remember Spracht, who used to live here? He's in Wall Street now; he put me up to a good thing."

"Spracht," answered Trevanion; "I've fixed things so that the beast can't come to this town while I'm here."

"Dear me! I hope he'll put me on to some more good investments before you catch him."

"Mr. Arthur March!"

"The Honorable Reginald Haricourt!"

"Miss Florence Worth!"

"Miss Ruxton!"

"Mr. and Mrs. John Wadsworth Morton!"

"All in a bunch, Molly!" called out Amy, with a fine affectation of familiar ease. "How warm you keep the house! Jack was afraid we'd be late."

"Not at all." Molly glanced at her sister-in-law—a mixture of pink velvet and paradise plumes—as little pink velvet as possible and as many plumes as she could carry, bursting upward from a thick bandeau of large imitation sapphires. "Glad to see you, Jack! You were not always so punctual."

Jack grinned.

"Oh, it's Amy! Since she's got the society bee in her bonnet, she's as punctual as an alarm clock. She gets loose in her sockets if you're a moment late."

"Social duties are social duties, Jack. You had no bringing up till I got you! Now, Molly, don't give us cold soup, for goodness' sake!"

"Upstart!" thought Trevanion.

"Dinner is served!"

There was an agreeable hustle, and Trevanion started to the dining-room with Mrs. Weston-Jones, sparkling and giggling; and Molly brought up the rear with the young Englishman, who was most desirous of pleasing and being pleased. The usual courses of an ultra-modern dinner followed one another without a pause. Mr. Weston-Jones sighed, and regretted the old days when dinners lasted hours, and there was a wine for every course.

"Not that I got many such dinners back in the Sixties; you know I'm a self-made man, and my poor father never had a chance until a railroad train took off one of his legs. He bought a house with the damages, and that gave him a start."

Mrs. Weston-Jones changed the subject by asking Mrs. Jack Morton if she were going to the Plaza matinée for increasing the vacation facilities for colored people employed in New York.

"At five dollars a ticket! Oh, no!" exclaimed Amy in her shrill voice. "Somebody will always look after the poor blacks, but nobody looks after the poor whites, like Jack and me."

Jack burst into loud laughter, in which Mr. Weston-Jones joined. Molly smiled. It was not possible for Amy to disconcert her. Arthur March seemed very much at his ease. To Trevanion's horror, he wore a dinner jacket with a white tie; but as this gave the host a certain sense of superiority, he felt more kindly to his friend. At least Arthur would see how well and calmly

he bore his honors; but Arthur was not thinking of anything but the goodness of the dinner; he hadn't had time to go home to his mother's for the midday meal, so he was frankly hungry. Mr. Haricourt and Molly had found some Irish friends, and their talk was flowing easily.

"I suppose, sir," Mr. Weston-Jones broke in suddenly, "that you are intimately acquainted with royalty, as you have an English title and are of the nobility."

The Englishman, thus suddenly addressed, blushed.

"I'm only a commoner," he said, "and a third son at that. My father has the title, and my older brother has a courtesy title, but I'm just a simple mortal."

Mr. Weston-Jones turned accusingly to his wife.

"Martha," he murmured, "I thought you said——"

"Of course, Mr. Haricourt, you are against Lloyd George?" said Miss Agnes Ruxton with great presence of mind. "I'm for him, of course!"

Miss Ruxton was a thin, alert young woman, with frank brown eyes, an elaborate coiffure, and a long string of pearls. One could not look at her without feeling that she was both sincere and capable.

"Lloyd George?" Mr. Haricourt thought a moment. "Naturally, my family are against him; but I think if the great estates are to be taken away from the Dukes, he might as well do it as anybody. He's no worse than Henry VIII."

Trevanion became all attention.

"Henry VIII!" Miss Ruxton dropped her fork. "Oh, yes, I see! You mean that Covent Garden and the abbeys were taken by force and given to your ancestors, and now the people who have had them so long ought not to complain. Clever!" Miss Ruxton recovered her fork and looked at Mr. Haricourt with interest. "I have often wondered whether if Agnosticism or the New Thought become very strong in England, the Anglicans might not have to give up Westminster Abbey and the Canterbury cathedral. I shouldn't care. Westminster has been made into a ridiculous museum anyhow; the Westminster cathedral is much finer, and will grow finer, if they don't spoil it with gimcracks. The New Thought would be just paying the Anglicans back! Serve them right!"

"Oh, Agnes!" exclaimed Molly. "It would be dreadful!"

"Oh, I don't know!" Miss Ruxton looked amiably around the table. "Low Church services in Canterbury cathedral are about as bad as anything the New Thought can do. Of course, you see, we'd been Catholics for a thousand years, and I'm naturally old-fashioned and queer."

"Not old-fashioned," said Trevanion, chuckling.

Molly looked at him across the table. He was certainly fatter and more commonplace than when she had first met him; but his eyes had not lost their kind look, and they were very kind and amused as they dwelt on the alert, pink face of little Miss Ruxton. Molly liked the gleam of his rare smile.

"You have rather North-of-Ireland eyebrows," said Miss Ruxton directly to her host; "and something about your shoulders makes me think you're an Orangeman and against Home Rule, and for that little group of Ulster men—the Three Tailors of Tooley Street, *I* call them! You see, I had an Irish father from the South."

Mr. Haricourt laughed.

"It's more serious than that. I suppose the Ulster Protestants are rather afraid that their separated brethren will do some of the things to them that they did to the Papists when good Queen Bess and the sainted Oliver lived."

"Nonsense!" returned Miss Ruxton; "they must know better."

Trevanion had knit his heavy eyebrows, trying to follow the rapid fire of talk. He hoped the two would go on; he was not accustomed to hearing serious subjects discussed in this way, but Amy's voice cut in:

"I thought of wearing my blue, Flossie. How lucky I didn't! Your green would have killed it; and I want to sit next to you after dinner. I have lots to talk about. I saw these gloves reduced to two-eighty-five to-day."

Trevanion lost the words Mr. Haricourt was saying to Miss Ruxton. He was sorry, for they both seemed intelligent. Miss Flossie Worth, a tall, blonde girl in a pale green dress and ornaments, who laid a malachite cigarette case ostentatiously by the side of her plate, suddenly turned from Amy:

"Of course, you're not royalty, Mr. Haricourt,

but you must know what that sort of people are like." She dimpled and smiled attractively.

"I've played bridge with one of the King's equerries, and he was very nice indeed. I've never been nearer to royalty than that, Miss Worth."

"Oh, how sad!" (Trevanion and Molly laughed.) "I mean how unusual!"

Molly reflected that she and Trevanion could not be so far apart since they could laugh together.

"Royalty keeps very much to itself, you know," said Mr. Haricourt. "I often wonder why you Americans, who ruthlessly cast our King away, are so much more interested in royalty than any other people."

"There are a few of us," said Mrs. Weston-Jones, "of the older families, who feel that George Washington was perhaps a little premature; still, classes exist among us—distinct classes."

"Yes." Mr. Haricourt seemed puzzled. "I am surprised to find so much discontent in this country. Many of your class, Mrs. Weston-Jones, seem to want to build up an aristocracy, and many of the other classes are preparing to make your social system even more democratic."

Trevanion's lips moved. Molly listened intently while the guests were solemnly eating.

"I really do not see why you Americans are not content to follow the traditions of your ancestors. My mother was an American, a Boston woman, and she often deplores the desire for—let us say, 'distinction,' without earning it, that is growing in your country. It seems to me," Mr. Haricourt added frankly, "that you are encouraging all the

evils that the best men in England are trying to get rid of."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Weston-Jones sarcastically. "Indeed? Look at London!"

Mr. Haricourt smiled.

"I never look at London when I can help it; but the horrible poverty and degradation in London in the lower circles—

> The places infamous to tell,
> Where God wipes not the tears from any eyes,—

as well as the delights and graces of life in other circles, are the result of centuries of misrule, of greed, of complicated avarice; but you have a clear slate. And now we overseas say of you, in admiration, you can buy and sell us. You, with your fresh, young heads and unlimited wealth, have done no more to wipe the tears from the eyes of the wretched than we have."

"We've been building up," said Trevanion with an uneasy feeling in his heart. "We can't break economic laws at once; we must amass wealth, which is power, and then discuss what can be done to—let us say—standardize comfort among the masses."

Molly turned away from her husband. "And this," she thought bitterly—"this man of the parrot tongue is the George Trevanion who seemed to be the one human being who could be true to truth!"

She brought her husband's speech to an abrupt conclusion by asking if Mrs. Leipsiger played bridge. Mr. Leipsiger smiled.

"Bianca? She has better things to do. She

can't afford to spend her life learning card rules. When she isn't studying a new part, she goes to the cathedral. She got the habit when she was working for her great death in 'The Princess of Monaco,' and she's kept it up."

"Bianca always was—" began Mrs. Welterman.

"Wonderful!" broke in Miss Ruxton—"that is, if you're talking of Bianca Capella. She's one of the greatest actresses that ever lived."

"I should love to be an actress!" said Miss Flossie Worth. "Art has a terrible fascination for me. Do you have that strange drawing to a life of dreams, Mr. Haricourt?"

"She is wonderful!" Arthur March, who had spoken very little, committed the unpardonable by breaking in half the sympathetic glance Miss Flossie had thrown at the young Englishman. "There is force and fire in everything she does."

Mr. Leipsiger's face glowed.

"Thank you!" He had not caught March's name, but he resolved to ask for it. Miss Flossie took her cigarette case in her long, white fingers, at a signal from the hostess, and the procession moved back to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXVI

"Your name, if you don't mind?" Leipsiger asked.

"Arthur March. I live in Orvisville."

"You're one of the men that my acquaintance hates so much—Spracht, you know."

"I hope he honors me that way; but I can't see why a man in your position should acknowledge Spracht as even an acquaintance."

Leipsiger felt irritated for a moment. A modern Napoleon of anything is shocked by familiarity from anybody who is not a Napoleon of something; but the frank, fearless look in March's face disarmed him.

"I'm afraid some of us use some queer tools. Spracht was one of Morton's, you know. He is clever, and he does things—quite legitimate, of course, in business—that other men wouldn't like to do. Have a cigar?"

Arthur meant to stiffen, but the tactful cigar meant peace.

"For instance, you can hardly call legitimate the inducing of honest men to strike 'at the right time,' and then helping to starve them out, because their employer is suffering from overproduction."

"No! no!" broke in Leipsiger. "Spracht is not known to me in that capacity. He seems to make good 'deals' and knows business secrets: he has a way of finding out things. By the way," he

added, "I see that you are really an admirer of my wife's acting—a real admirer; and you'll perhaps help her by hanging on to me to-night, and using all the arguments you can against a proposition Welterman and Weston-Jones want to offer me. That's what the dinner means. Miss Ruxton drips with cash—she's a big stockholder in the Canning Syndicate; they want to get her, too; Trevanion's already in. Miss Flossie has been asked to amuse the Englishman and keep him out of the way; and I don't know where you come in, unless Providence has sent you to help support me."

"I'm sure I don't know. The invitation was unexpected. Trevanion is now too busy to see much of me." (March said this smiling.) "We don't altogether agree."

"My wife is set against this new deal. Why, I don't know. Intuition, I suppose; but I rather think she wants me to finance some friends of her own. Her scheme is sure to cost less money, for she has a lot of common sense." Mr. Leipsiger bit off another piece of his cigar. He was not a graceful smoker, and looked sharply at March. "You've seen in the gossip papers something about an estrangement between my wife and myself. Well, there's no truth in that. Actresses are fair game for all who talk. We had differences, and she will not always forgive." He sighed. "I wish sometimes we were like the Belfords in our company. He's the leading man in 'The Princess' and she's the soubrette. They have awful rows; I suppose most married people have at some time or other. But suddenly—they're

Catholics, you know—they drag each other off to Mass or confession or something, and for at least a month they're like doves. Bianca isn't that way: she keeps it up. Now, she didn't want me to come to-night; she dislikes Welterman, and disdains Nina because she married him. She told me that Welterman would set some kind of a trap for me, and he has; but I'm no match for these business people, though I'm well enough in the theatrical line. Now you've no interest in putting me in this deal; so if you'll just perforate their iridescent bubbles when they become too iridescent for my strength—they know I'm weak in all the things they know—you can have a stage box for 'self and friends' whenever you like."

Arthur looked puzzled.

"Are you serious?"

"Sure! I had not courage enough to refuse the bid for to-night, and no doubt they've a good thing for some of my surplus cash; they're shrewd, but you see my wife's against it; but I can't with any dignity give *that* as a reason. They'll say she's *only* a woman of genius. Spracht's behind all this; but Trevanion doesn't know it. I don't deny that it will bring money in—but Bianca!"

"Very well," said March, "I shall not betray your confidence. I'm only a business man in a small way, but I think I can help you."

Leipsiger chuckled.

"Of course, my speaking to you is unusual; but a young woman, whom Mrs. Leipsiger looks on as a marvel, said you were all right; and any port in a storm."

"A young woman!"

"Forget her name: a partner in Madame Madeline's business."

"Oh, I'll do my best! The plot thickens!" He laughed.

"I like your laugh." Leipsiger chewed his cigar fiercely. "I haven't laughed that way since I was a boy."

In the meantime Jack Morton had told Miss Ruxton that he had always adored women older than himself.

"Your nurse was older than you, I imagine," she responded at once. "Now, come, young man, if you haven't anything better to say than that, don't speak. I can drink my coffee in silence. Just move your lips and let people think you are talking."

Jack felt very young and embarrassed. He looked at his brother-in-law—a picture of honesty and sturdiness, but likewise of self-satisfaction.

"What do you think of our host, Miss Ruxton?"

"I never talk about people behind their backs. I've rather a tart tongue; and my confessor told me that if I must say unpleasant things, to say them directly to people. He said it might wound them, but it wouldn't wound charity so much. If you want to know what I think of you, I'll tell you."

"No, no!" said Jack hastily. "Isn't my wife pretty?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I know you mean that."

"She looks" (Miss Ruxton closed her eyes dreamily) "as if she'd develop some character, if she had a sensible husband. Girls so very young as she is should never marry idiots."

"Miss Ruxton!"

"I did not say that you were an idiot, did I? I do not know a thing about you: you look like a rather dissipated college boy. But what do I know about it?"

Jack was delighted when Amy came to the sofa.

"You and Jack seem to be enjoying yourselves," she said in her high voice. "Jack, get me some *liqueur;* I'm cold."

"You should put on more clothes," returned Miss Ruxton, glancing at Amy's sleevelessness. "To be so *décolleté* isn't pretty; it only makes people feel like turning up their coat collars."

Amy tried to put on an air of great haughtiness.

"No use," whispered Jack. "She'll have the last word. She's a terrible old trout."

"Thank you!" smiled Miss Ruxton. "You might just as well have said it out loud. I am."

Jack and Amy, routed, fled to the protection of Mrs. Weston-Jones. Jack's place was taken by Reginald Haricourt, who had been waiting for his chance. He began at once to defend Gothic architecture against Miss Ruxton's claims for the Byzantine. Miss Flossie Worth was marooned on a small rug, with her cigarettes. Everybody was talking business; even Molly, who was violently opposing something Welterman had said about a new department store. Miss Ruxton was

called by Mrs. Weston-Jones to the other circle at the smoking table, and this released Mr. Haricourt, who drifted slowly to Miss Worth's island.

"It will be the greatest thing on the continent!" Mr. Welterman spoke with fervor. "It will make every department store in the world turn yellow. We've already killed the reputation of the *Bon Marché* and other European shops. It will require capital; but I think that we here—Molly Morton——"

Trevanion stiffened. "Molly!" It was a lack of tact to put things that way. "Weston-Jones, Leipsiger, Miss Ruxton, and your humble servant. Our credit would be unlimited."

"Well," said Trevanion with the intention of getting nearer the foreground of the picture, "you'd have to show the calculations, and reasonably."

"That's all been done to our satisfaction, and Molly is half convinced."

Trevanion bit his lip.

"That always happens when you marry a rich woman," he thought. "It's unnatural; they're shoving me into a corner."

"Oh," said Leipsiger, smiling beneath his mustache at Trevanion's expression, "Mr. Trevanion has shown such cleverness in his business relations that I must hear his opinion before we go further."

Miss Ruxton smiled. She expected a duel between this direct, honest-looking man and the astute financiers.

"How much capital should we be obliged to put in? You see, your wondrous scheme, includ-

ing a skyscraper of thirty-eight stories or so, needs an enormous amount of money. I suppose we could stand it. Eh, Molly? But it would be a pull. One must expand continually, though it keeps one poor."

"I don't see the necessity," said Molly dryly.

"Why not?" retorted Trevanion. "Nowadays money must be made to breed money; the more money, the more power."

"Do you mean the more power for doing good?" asked Arthur March.

"I said the more power," repeated Trevanion, with the air of a man discouraging an interloper.

"Mr. March has asked a very pertinent question. I don't see why we should want more power, if it's not for doing good," said Molly, growing slightly paler. "Why put millions into a huge building and induce five or six hundred young girls to work for starvation wages? I'm not desirous of that kind of power."

Trevanion made a movement of impatience.

"Molly," he said, drawing his hands closer together, "you're like all women: you always mix up economic and financial forces—which are the greatest factors in the world to-day—with sentiment and ethics."

"You can't divorce them." Arthur March spoke fervently. "A monopoly——"

"Oh, we're tired of talk about the trusts!" Trevanion spoke angrily.

"*I* have never had much to say against a money trust. Money must circulate, no matter what you do. A land trust is the great evil; but, George" (Arthur March's voice expressed surprise and

sadness), "this is all so unlike you; there was a time when you could not divorce economics from ethics."

"This is all beside the question," Mr. Weston-Jones' voice was exceedingly authoritative. "Mr. Spracht, a very keen person, employed by many other keen persons, has discovered the opportunity for us of acquiring an excellent—I may say unprecedentedly excellent—site on Broadway for a department store, for the stock of which we could create a tremendous demand. It will take money to create this demand; to make people," he added, with a laugh, "think they need things we have to sell. The law of supply and demand is now a mere toy in the hands of practical psychologists, like ourselves." He laughed unctuously and asked for whiskey and soda, with the air of one whose health has been drunk by listening thousands.

There was silence.

"Exactly!" Mr. Welterman spoke with deep conviction.

"You see it, Leipsiger?" asked Mr. Weston-Jones.

"I'm trying to see it," replied Mr. Leipsiger.

"It's a great idea!" Trevanion looked at Molly for approval.

"I can't help feeling that it's a carefully planned machine for displacing a number of things that exist by another thing for which there is no normal demand," said Mr. Leipsiger; "and I'm rather struck by the uselessness of leading people to buy luxuries they ought not to have, or stuff that is worthless to them, and encouraging

a lot of girls to live in poverty when they might be good cooks in decent families."

"Of course," said Mr. Welterman, "my brother-in-law means that if you spent no money in department stores you might have more for theatre tickets; and, then, the chorus girls and the supers at the Renascence are so well paid."

There was a laugh, in which the manager joined.

"The chorus girls and the supers have gay and cheerful work, and good pay compared with the drudgery in the big shops," Leipsiger retorted. "I shall stick to my theatre."

"He's on his ear!" whispered the elegant Welterman. "Smooth him down. We can't lose this chance, and he has lots of money. Mrs. Trevanion, I think we may count on you; and if you go in, we'll find a way to smooth Abe's objections."

Two red spots began to burn in Molly's cheeks.

Welterman looked at Miss Ruxton appealingly.

"Oh," Miss Ruxton said, in answer to the glance. "Don't look at *me!* Whatever Molly says I do. Ever since we were at school together, I'm her slave. It was she made my fortune by inducing me to invest it in cans—'tins,' I mean," she added, with a demure glance at Mr. Haricourt, who was still marooned on the island with Miss Worth.

"Right!" said Mr. Weston-Jones. "An infant Daniel—or was it Samuel?—come to judgment!"

"It's a good chance, Molly!"

Molly paid no attention to her husband's speech.

"I have other plans." Her color came and went, but her voice was very firm, with that musical value in it that no emotion ever destroyed. "Orvisville is full of poverty, hopelessness and unrest, and unhappiness, occasioned by our greed for money. It is my home, and I hope—I thought once I could have said 'we'—to make it a home for many other people—a home they could love because it is worthy of love. That can not be done by setting our surplus to attract more money at the risk of injuring human beings. Perhaps I oughtn't to have said that; but whether you injure human beings or not by your great projects, they are not for me. A part of our surplus must be returned to the hard-working people who helped father to make it. Why, if I did anything else, the ivy hedge would begin to sprout again."

"There you are!" whispered Jack. "We'll never get what we ought to have."

"Keep quiet!" whispered Amy, in return. "I think your sister is a most ungrateful person; but there is something in what she says. If you'd ever been poor yourself, you'd know it."

"I cut out of your plan," Mr. Leipsiger said, much relieved. "Another cup of coffee? Let's play bridge."

Mr. Welterman glanced powerlessly at Molly.

"How," he asked, in his most sarcastic tone of voice, "do you, Mr. Trevanion, hope to realize your wife's plan?"

The question struck home. From the height of his own recently acquired wealth he regarded Trevanion as a parvenu.

Trevanion clenched his fists.

"There was a plan which I heard my husband and Mr. March discuss here some months ago. It suited me then; and since I have thought it over, it suits me better. Do you remember that idea of yours about profit-sharing?"

"I have forgotten it." Trevanion was hoarse with rage.

"Then perhaps Mr. March will remember it?" Molly's heart was cold. Every word her husband said was trebly painful to her. It was not that he had disappointed her: it was that he had fallen so terribly below those ideals with which he had inspired her in the beginning.

March was only too glad to explain to this seemingly hostile audience his pet plan.

"You know," he said, very simply, "that when an employer deducts the interest on his capital, the sinking fund for emergencies and a fair percentage for himself, the rest, outside the other necessary expenses, ought to go to his workmen."

"We *know!*" cried Welterman. "Oh"—his words choked him.

"Madness—sheer madness!" cried Mrs. Weston-Jones. "Imbecility!"

"Oh, come!" was all Mr. Weston-Jones could say. "You're soft in the head."

"Not at all!" cried Arthur. "I am simply stating an ethical, economic truth."

"Oh, bosh!" said Miss Ruxton. "Talk United States. What does it all mean? But I never could understand words of more than two syllables. You know how it was at school, Molly!"

But Molly was not listening. Her eyes were fixed intently on her husband. Amy followed her

glance with a puzzled look. What could Molly mean by that intensity of expression, pathetic and appealing, almost despairing? The real strength in Amy's character seemed to respond to it. While a babble of amazement went on, during Arthur March's speech, Amy turned her attention to Trevanion. His face was sullen; his brows drawn together.

"I don't believe, after all, that Molly's mean or proud," she thought suddenly. "She just wants to make real people of us. She's trying to remake that upstart of a husband of hers; I can see that."

March's voice emerged.

"I believe that the honest, hard-working, alert employees are entitled to a share in the profits."

"That's Socialism; I heard that you were a Roman Catholic," said Mrs. Weston-Jones coldly, "and I've always imagined that your Church absolutely forbade any thinking along these pernicious lines—as interfering with vested interests."

"I *am* a Catholic," said March; "but I don't see that that has anything to do with profit sharing, unless you mean to say that Catholics are forbidden to think on questions of economics. Well, I am amazed that an intelligent and successful person like you could have an idea that Catholics must be slaves. We do believe certain doctrines; but, that belief given, we know that it is our duty to think. Otherwise we are slothful."

"Imagine," whispered Welterman to his wife, "March talking that way to a millionaire like

Weston-Jones! Why, I don't believe he has a thousand dollars in the world!"

"You can't stop Ikey's talking in the same way," returned his wife resentfully. "I must say I like it. A cat can look even at a can king."

"If any giant concern should practically recall the truth that money or land can not be the property, by a kind of divine right, of any individual or group of individuals, held, in spite of all the duties of brotherly love and charity, it would make an industrial epoch, and perhaps alleviate a world-wide discontent which can never be wholly eliminated. Business men are not excused by the rules of their game from attempting, at least, to love their neighbors as themselves."

Amy was listening, and she thought:

"It is hard on poor people, such as we are, when there seems to be nothing in sight. I'll have a good talk with Jack, or I'll divorce him, and give part of the alimony to the poor."

"The distribution of wealth in our country must be more equalized, and *men* rather than profit must be recognized at their value. You see, I believe that the best in our world must perish, unless Christian morality becomes part of life. You, Trevanion, always admitted *that;* you can't make people good by making them comfortable; but every man with a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness has a right to be free from the terrible fear of starvation—from the horrible nightmare of beastly almshouses, sometimes run by real scoundrels, into which the poor are swept like refuse, and forgotten, until a politician who

is out wants the job of a rival politician who is in."

"Go it, March!" said Mr. Leipsiger.

"But what has your Church—or any Church, for that matter—done to improve matters?" asked Welterman with a sneer.

"The Churches, sir" (March came down to earth with a thud, and stammered for an instant) —"the Churches in this country have only such economic power as individuals give them. The Catholic Church, for instance, is not a rich corporation, sufficient for itself pecuniarily; it is dependent, so far as money is concerned, on the sense of duty and charity of its members, like the other denominations of the country. But it invented hospitals; and there is hardly any conceivable branch of practical charity that it did not invent when it had the power to carry into practice its inventions, to the greater glory of God. And, if you compare the houses of the Little Sisters of the Poor with some of the almshouses—ugh! But that's not the question. Trevanion, can't you explain what I want to say?" March suddenly felt that he was occupying too much attention. "We've talked it over often enough, and you *can* talk!" There was a note of the old boyish confidence in his voice. He looked at Trevanion.

"No!" said Trevanion. "I'm a practical man."

"He is a cad," said Amy to herself. "I certainly shan't let my Jack grow up that way."

Mr. Haricourt stepped away from the island of Persian rug, forgetting the charming Miss Worth for a moment. He spoke eagerly:

"I think you have much that is right on your side; but wouldn't all this lead to a kind of paternalism on the part of the corporations—paternalism which would lead to the worst evils of Socialism?"

"The worst evil of Socialism is that it pretends to be a religion and a morality as dogmatic as ever existed. Following it, you supply the absolutism of a monarch by the absolutism of the State, founded on the false idea—which no monarch ever held—that human nature needs only fresh air, good food, hygienics and eugenics to be perfect!"

"Mr. Leipsiger chuckled.

"Go it!" he said. "Anything to keep these financial whales from gobbling up my little all," he whispered to Mrs. Welterman. "Bianca will kill me if I cough up any money."

"I know Bianca," Mrs. Welterman returned *sotto voce;* "she's a dear, but difficult!"

"What I mean is," said Mr. Haricourt very modestly, in spite of his monocle, which to the prejudiced American eye seemed to imply a certain condescension, "that if you began to divide the profits, you might take the attitude that you'd have to see how they were spent; in America here I find that your reformers have a passion for definitions. You make a definition, and you expect people to live up to it. I suspect that you, Mr. March, would define Christian morality, and cut off the profits from that employee who did not live rightly. Wouldn't you?"

March lowered his eyes, and hesitated. This had been in his mind.

"In a word, you'd look on your men as beneficiaries rather than as people who had a right to the profits they earned," continued Mr. Haricourt. "If their conduct didn't please you; if they spent their money extravagantly, you'd stop their profits; whereas, if you, as their employer, spent your profits foolishly or even unchristianly, your employees would be snubbed if they tried to take away your profits."

"Charming idea!" said Mr. Weston-Jones. "Well, let's all sit down—the ladies, with a view to keeping their figures, have been standing long enough. I presume, Mrs. Trevanion, you see" (for he was all good humor, and fancied that Haricourt had turned the tide toward his project)—"how foolish any profit-sharing scheme would be."

"And, then," continued Mr. Haricourt, "you wouldn't give her full share of the profit to a woman in your employ, no matter how efficient she was, unless she supported a family. She'd have to marry a worthless husband in order to increase her income."

March was still silent. Everybody laughed, even Trevanion.

"It's true," March said, "tradition and education have made me look at the workingman's share of the profit as a gift dependent on good conduct rather than as a right."

"A right!" Mr. Weston-Jones broke out. "What right have these people to anything but the market price of their labor?"

"In sweat shops that question is always answered in the affirmative." Arthur March had

gained his second wind. "Where do you leave the obligation of common helpfulness if you admit only the obligations of paying your working people what you must, and no more? You must admit that the work of the laborer improves not only land, but all other means of production; but leaving all that aside, the worker, as a right, ought to have the means of maintaining himself and his family; he ought, too, to have the opportunity to cultivate both his soul and his mind; these things are rights, not concessions, and he must not be interfered with in the educating of his family. The capitalist who, market value or not, interferes in these three rights in order to increase his profits is a thief."

"Come," said Mr. Welterman, ostentatiously attempting to conceal a yawn, "let us cease to hold a debating society and make up some tables for bridge."

Arthur March took his leave, apologizing to his hostess for having talked so much.

"I thank you," she said warmly, "although," she added, smiling a little, "I'm afraid you did turn a stock-selling party into a debating society. I hope I shall see you again. You can help me in my work."

"Good-night, George!" Molly moved toward the staircase after the guests had gone.

"Good-night!" said Trevanion. "You certainly reminded me to-night at every turn that I, a pauper, had married a rich woman."

"When I married you," she retorted, standing at the top of the landing, her white gown shining

out against the black wall, "you were richer than any millionaire could be."

She threw herself beside the boy's crib. She thought of her dead father, of Jack, of Amy—who for the first time had kissed her affectionately—of Trevanion.

"I have nobody but God, and He seems so far off!"

She wept softly that the child might not awaken.

"At least," she thought, when her tears had ceased, "he is mine—the boy is mine; I can mold him as I please."

CHAPTER XXVII

MRS. TREVANION had given breakfast to her husband and "tidied" her house. The old woman now sat between the two windows of her kitchen, in the morning light, reading her Welsh Bible.

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." She repeated the words in Welsh and in English. They brought sadness into her mind. She thought of her son. With the optimism of all mothers she could not see his faults as she would have seen the faults in other women's sons; but she admitted to herself that the Lord was not building her son's house. The indomitable old woman was having one of her days of depression. Her keen black eyes had lost their light; they had brightened for a few moments when she had fought a battle with the grocer's boy, and insisted on counting the potatoes he brought her in the basket supposed to hold a peck; but now the fight was over and she was listless.

A step was heard on the gravel of the little pathway that led through the back yard; but she did not move.

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," she read again.

The latch of the kitchen door was lifted and her son entered.

"George!" she exclaimed breathlessly. "What is the matter? Who is ill? Not the boy?"

"No." He hung his hat and light overcoat on the rack beside the cupboard. "Oh, no, mother! *I'm* ill and out of sorts, so I thought I'd come to see you. I stayed up in the library all night, and I'm too stupid for ordinary human intercourse; and when a man feels thoroughly selfish and out of touch with the world, he can go only to his mother. Nobody else would stand him."

Trevanion was certainly a picture of depression. He had walked to the house. She saw that by the dust on his shoes. She hated the noise of his motor car; it attracted the attention of her neighbors, and it brought home to her a knowledge of the gulf rapidly widening between her son and herself.

"How's father?"

"He's just gone to sleep again. Ah, George, he's not long for the world! If you're going to have any gaieties up at the great house, have them soon; for it will not be long before you will be in mourning." She brushed the moisture from her eyes. "He was a good man, and was very proud of you till pain took away his sense. Sit down, George."

Trevanion swung heavily into the vacant rocking-chair.

"It's too early for coffee?"

"No," he said, knowing that it would please her. "I have taken none this morning yet; so you'll make me a cup, mother."

She went about this pleasant task, bustling and talking. It was like old times. Her son watched her. The pain in his heart eased a little, but it

did not go. The coffee was ready, and the two drew up to the oilcloth-covered kitchen table.

"What were you reading when I came in, mother?"

"A bit out of the Good Book, George. You know it well: 'Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' But it sounds better in Welsh. It's a great comfort—the Good Book."

"I'm not saying it's not, mother," he answered. "It's a great Book to read in order to understand human nature, which is the same to-day, yesterday, and to-morrow. And it's a beautiful Book. There's nothing like it for poetry. But it's never been a comfort to me, and it's not now, though I need comfort and guidance sorely."

"Even your mother can't take the place of the Good Book, and of Him who speaks through it."

"Mother, you know I've never lied to you."

Mrs. Trevanion's tight lips relaxed, and she nodded. A thrill ran through her heart. After all, she was necessary to this strong man who wanted to build the temple with his own hands.

"And now," he went on, "I must tell you that I do not *know,* and that I don't believe that the Bible is an infallible voice of direction. You tell me so, but that is not enough; clergymen tell me so, but that isn't enough. I can read the splendid passages and the sad passages with pleasure; but there are great passages in other books. For hundreds of years the Christian world accepted the Bible from Rome, and then all of a sudden things changed, and you kicked off Rome and kept its Bible."

"I will not argue." Mrs. Trevanion spoke passionately. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He will lead me through the green pastures and the clear waters. Be humble and believe, my son."

Trevanion took up his coffee cup and went to the window—a favorite movement of his—as of one seeking the light.

"Mother" (he walked back to the table), "Molly and I are not—friends. She expects too much."

"Sit down, George!" His mother feared to give him the advantage of standing while she sat. "What does Molly expect?"

"She expects me to play second fiddle; she expects me to forego all the advantages that money can give a man to-day. I can double, treble, the fortune her father left, and yet she will not have it."

"You talk as if you had married her for her money." Mrs. Trevanion's lips closed hard after she delivered the shot.

Trevanion rose again.

"You are the only person in the world that would dare say that to me!"

"I say it again. If you weigh for a moment the question of money against your wife's love and trust, you make it easy for people to say what you hate to hear."

He sank back into his chair, and put his face between his hands.

"Here," he said, "I find myself in a position of great responsibility toward the vast fortune. I ought to do my duty by it."

Mrs. Trevanion's lips parted in a smile.

"Your duty—to dollars!" she chuckled. "Not long ago you talked to me about the duty of dollars to human beings, but you've changed your cry. Molly married you, I believe, because she loved you as a man among men, and thought she could trust you. Mary Coyne, having the second sight, felt that you weren't so unlike the mob, and she didn't trust you altogether. And she was right."

"You don't talk like *my* mother," he said, reddening furiously. "Mother, you have no right to say that!"

"I have the right to tell you the truth. Listen! You know what we suffered from the poverty forced on us by your father's accident. By no law of justice should we have been cut down to starve because the men that employed him were stingy and careless. But they had the excuse that you have: they had to do their duty to their dollars, to make them breed more dollars; and so my poor old man was left helpless in the hands of a pauper woman with two children. You see, the employers were full of duty to themselves and their dollars. We pulled through—oh, yes, we pulled through, but at what cost!"

George was silent.

Mrs. Trevanion threw her hands to heaven, and broke out wildly in her native tongue.

"Oh, God," she said, "it is not easy to take with a gratified heart what proud people leave! It was not easy for me. But, then, when they said, 'Poor Mr. Trevanion!' they meant it contemptuously; for to-day, among Christians, to be

poor is to be despised. I almost gave up going to church. There was a pew at the back for 'the poor.' It was hard. But never mind that. Once, I think, one of the great ladies of the parish guessed somehow that I did not come often to church because of that 'poor pew,' and she said, 'Mrs. Trevanion, you shouldn't be above your position in life.' But that's neither here nor there. And yet, when I reflect, I suffer it all over again every time. And now what has come to you with riches? Hardness of heart. It's the dollar you care for, and not the poor mothers and the children that can be helped with dollars. Money's your master and not your servant——"

"Mother!"

Mrs. Trevanion rose up and put both her wrinkled hands on her son's shoulders. She looked into his eyes.

"No matter what you do, George, I'll always love you" (she sat down again), "and I speak from love. And Molly has found that out. You could not, on the husks of your pagan knowledge, keep up your love for justice, your respect for the poor, your desire to suffer poverty, to save others from its horrors. You turned your back on the Book, and on Molly, who, wanting help and guidance to higher things, finds that you are pulling her down. She is not the kind of woman that would let herself be pulled down even by the man she loved."

Mrs. Trevanion spoke as if she were defending the nobility of all her sex.

"Pulling Molly down!" Trevanion said angrily. "That's a new idea. For all your boast

of second-sight, mother, you sometimes make frightful mistakes."

"If I thought that any son of mine could be a fool, I'd have proof of it this minute, George Trevanion!" Mrs. Trevanion's eyes glowed, and she raised her right hand in a manner that made her son shrink away involuntarily; it had always preceded one of the "spankings" of his youth. "You—you think—you are a tower of strength, because of late you've got into the habit of mind of regarding yourself as superior to other people; and that's a bad habit. Molly sees clearly. Riches and luxury could not make her see crooked. She married you because she thought you saw straight—you were uncorrupted by the influence of money-grabbing. The man to you seemed more than the dollar; but it's the dollar in your sight that's beginning to blot out the man."

Trevanion moved back to the window again, furious, humiliated, hearing the echo of Molly's words.

"She sees that, and she will soon begin to despise you as one beneath her. Let a man beware" (Mrs. Trevanion almost screamed) "of causing a woman to despise his moral cowardice! A man may lose health, energy, wit itself; if she knows that, even in spite of her, he has resisted the weakness of trampling on his convictions, she will still love him. But when she despises him—"

"Take care, mother!"

"Take care, my son!" Mrs. Trevanion rose to her full height, her eyes flaming; her gray hair, unbound by the violence of her movements, fell about her face; both her arms waved denounc-

ingly. "Take care! 'Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar; His wrath burneth, and is heavy to bear; His lips are filled with indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire.' Take care! Your father has been for years worse than dead, yet I love him; but if he had deliberately fallen below the ideals of an honest man, I should have done my duty to him in hatred and bitterness of spirit. A mother can forgive everything, but not a wife."

Trevanion faced his mother.

"What have I done? What object is there in my standing still, while everybody with like advantages is rushing forward?"

"Where?" demanded Mrs. Trevanion. "'For Topheth is prepared from yesterday—prepared by the King, deep and wide. The nourishments thereof are fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, as a torrent of brimstone, doth kindle it.'"

Trevanion moved impatiently.

"What do you think the Lord wants me to do?" he asked with a touch of flippancy.

"Since you will not accept the Word, at least learn from the voice of a good, pure woman—your wife."

Trevanion laughed ironically.

"You substitute for the Bible a pure woman. I have heard some of your preachers denounce the Romans for this. It is at least more human."

Mrs. Trevanion suddenly astonished her son by dropping her head on the kitchen table and breaking into a passion of tears.

"Don't, mother—don't!" Trevanion ap-

proached, and, kneeling, put his arm around his mother's neck. "Oh, don't, don't!"

She sobbed, unheeding him.

"Go!" she sobbed—"go! Try to find the Lord, and He will direct you. Go, go, and let Him build your house!"

"Where am I to go, mother? Who can show me the way? I have no guide, since I can not accept your Book. But I will"—his pride rose in arms, but he cast it down—"I will ask Molly to guide me."

Mrs. Trevanion rose and listened intently. There was a slight sound above, and then the thud of a fall on the thickly carpeted floor. Mother and son, love and fear giving speed to each, reached the upper floor.

There was no mistaking the condition of the helpless old man; he had fallen like a stone, and he seemed to be as dead as a stone looks.

"Oh, my son," Mrs. Trevanion cried, "my life has gone! I am alone! But don't you think that when I spoke those words of Isaiah loudly to you that he must have heard them, and died with the words of the Good Book in his ears?"

She threw herself down beside the wreck of the man she had loved and tended for so many years and poured forth words, in her native tongue, burning with supplication. Trevanion rushed off for the doctor. All things on earth seemed dwarfed by this sudden going away of the old and helpless man, his father. Such is the power of that wonderful and most sweet of all things—love.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BIANCA CAPELLA and Madeline came to terms. They understood each other at once. Mary was ruled out of their counsels. Madeline saw that she had to deal with a woman as shrewd as herself; and when Norman blood, coming by the way of Canada, is mixed with the red fluid of Connaught, a bargain becomes a bargain; and Bianca Capella, for all her love of art, had the practical common-sense of her race. She saw at once that she could make a good stroke of business by annexing Madeline's skill and executive ability to her husband's theater. Costumers and *couturières* were an uncertain crowd; and Bianca Capella guessed that Mary Coyne's patience would help materially in dealing with capricious actresses, who are very hard to manage. Madeline knew with whom she was dealing. Bianca Capella, desirous as she was of benefiting Mary Coyne, would not leave any details to chance.

"No," said Madeline. "Everything must be in black and white. Of course, Madame Capella, you're young; but if anything should happen to you I couldn't have a man coming in here and interfering."

"Certainly—I know! Leipsiger might not understand how valuable our present arrangement will be to the theater."

"I am glad you think that way." Madeline, gauging the character of her new partner, was

determined to be aggressive. "I have another reason. People of genius, like you, are sometimes capricious; it's often a part of their temperament. Business people, like myself, can not afford to take risks. You may return a whole lot of green costumes which you have ordered by daylight because the color seems blue in the electric glare."

The actress drew herself up and "looked daggers" at Madeline, but Madeline met her glance firmly.

"I say green for example, but it might be pink or red. You'd return the whole lot, representing years of work, and I'd have to bear more than half the loss."

Madeline trembled internally as she made this speech.

"You see," she continued, "you rich people grow careless. You don't mind money, so it never occurs to you that we have great need of it. If you returned fifty or sixty costumes, which would have to be sold at second-hand, you, as our partner, would be obliged to pay half the loss."

"That would be just."

"No, it wouldn't be just, because money to me is worth four times more than it is to you. The loss of a thousand dollars would ruin me. It would cut off the wages of my working people, too. I should have to reduce the wages of my girls or ask them to wait, just because, in a fit of disgust, a great actress decided that green-blue does not suit her in a certain light."

Bianca Capella laughed.

"You good Normans!" she said in high good

humor. "A French-Yankee is the worst of all. But you are right. See that the contract is just."

There was a knock at the door. Madeline mechanically called "Come in!" thinking that the visitor was Mary Coyne. Mazie Verney entered.

"I thought that you were alone, Madame Madeline."

Bianca Capella glanced quickly at the pale, well-molded face of the girl. She saw at once that she was unusually graceful and rather pretty, in spite of the shadows under the eyes.

"What a Mademoiselle de Sombreuil she would make in 'The Princess' if she were not just an ignorant sewing girl!"

"I am busy, Miss Verney." Madeline spoke in her cool, professional tone.

"But no!" the actress interposed. "My business can wait. Tell Madame Madeline what you have to say. I want to listen," she added, with the *naïveté* of one who had come to look at human beings from the point of view of their availability for theatrical purposes.

"State your case," said Madeline briefly.

Mazie Verney fixed her eyes on the actress, who was, as usual, seated effectively in a low chair —Madame Capella looked on all chairs and rooms as backgrounds for herself. Mazie hesitated; the actress awed and interested her.

"I came to say that I am about to leave—to be married, and" (she smiled) "I don't think you'll miss me much. I *hate* the work; but I must say that you have made it as agreeable as such beastly slavery can be made anywhere. And as for Miss Coyne, she's an angel! To sit here all day sew-

ing on pretty clothes for other women is worse than imprisonment for me."

Madame Capella listened, pleased by the rich tone in the voice.

"You marry," she broke in, "because you want to get away from your work?"

Miss Verney's pale cheeks were touched all of a sudden by color.

"What right have you to ask such a question, Madame?"

"None, but I ask it all the same."

The two women eyed each other. A glint of kindliness in the older woman's expression induced the other to reply:

"You are right. I am going to marry to have something of my own—to be free—not to feel that each day is a day of slavery. I am about to marry to be independent."

"Hear the little innocent! No person is ever independent."

"*I* shall be. My *fiancé*, Mr. Rudolf Spracht, is rich——"

"Rudolf Spracht! Shall I never cease to hear that man's name connected with some villainy?"

"Spracht!" echoed Madeline.

Mazie Verney carefully closed the door. Whatever might be said by these wild women against her proposed husband, it should not be heard outside in the workroom.

"You can't marry him!" Madame Capella said. "Good Heavens! I feel as if I were in the scene of 'Faust,' with Mephistopheles following me at every step! Shall I never get rid of that Spracht? You can not marry him!"

"I will!"

Mazie Verney faced Madame Capella, her languid eyes on fire, her lips closed and haughty.

"I believe she could almost be 'Elizabeth' to my 'Mary Stuart,' " thought Madame Capella, who even in times of great personal emotion never for a moment lost sight of the theatrical feeling; she called it her "double sense."

"You will not! I will first get a certain Mr. McGill to tell you his story. You will *not* when you have learned what Spracht is."

"I will! He may be a murderer, but he will at least take me out of *this!*"

"Miss Verney, I feel like shaking you and banging some sense into you head. You don't love this demon. If you hate the life here—and that is your only reason for casting yourself into a pit—I will make you an offer. You will come with me and learn to be an actress. My heart has spoken. I am a fool, perhaps—I will see Spracht. *You* need never see him again."

"She has the qualification at least," said Madeline (who did not like this long diversion from the real purpose of the interview), "of liking to turn night into day."

"Do you mean this, Madame?"

Mazie clasped Madame Capella's hand fervently, saying:

"I have met Mr. Spracht only three times at public dances. Last night he proposed. Oh, Madame Capella, if you will take me into the theater, you can tell him anything. I will try so hard! It's my ideal life."

Madame Capella looked again at her profile.

"Yes, with that voice she will do. Come to the Renascence to-morrow at eleven. But, remember, you must not see Spracht. I will see him, and Sandy McGill will tell you his story."

Madeline listened to Madame Capella's proposal with mingled astonishment and contempt. To her practical mind, the spectacle of a sane woman choosing a useless slip of a girl for a place in her theatrical company was absurd; and, had the man in question been anybody but Spracht, she would have promptly concluded that he was entirely too good for the foolish Mazie. She had no conception of the capricious intuitions that were at once the pleasure and the pain of the actress.

"You may have the articles of partnership drawn up as soon as you like, Madame Madeline. I'll sign them, and if you are inconvenienced by my sister-in-law's withdrawal, just send me a note. There will be a check ready. And you, Miss (what's your name?)—you come to the stage door of the theater to-morrow. You'll have to choose between the stage and Spracht—between the deep sea and the devil. Good-by! I must see Miss Coyne and get a draught of fresh air."

Mary was in the next room. She raised her eyes, full of tenderness and gratitude, and began to speak; but Bianca Capella checked her.

"Come, get your hat! The car is waiting. It's nearly time to close. We'll drive to the cathedral."

Mary spoke to Madeline, and then followed her friend. Madame Capella had time to throw her-

self into a rage. Dupré had forgotten to put fresh roses in the vases.

"Don't mind me, my dear!" she said, when Mary was seated beside her. "Oh, I wish to Heaven I could withstand my impulses! I've done more harm by promising to do good than any other woman in the world. And the trouble these promises have cost me! But I wanted to ask you something. It's been on my mind. I've felt it since I went to the cathedral with you the last time—as if I had seen a new Light; but it's dim. I want truth and love, and a rule of love; you seem to have found them all."

"But, Madame Capella, I must thank you. You don't know from what your kindness has saved me."

"Never mind! I want to talk to you about myself. I have suffered horribly—I *am* suffering horribly. Sometimes I forget. It seemed as if there were no God, but a horrible Force tormenting me, until I knelt the other day with you, and then something happened; I saw hope."

"But, Madame, you are morbid. There's something wrong with your health. You are tired out. You are beautiful, successful, rich—"

Madame Capella waved her hand impatiently.

"I can't get rid of my sin." Her voice was very low and intense. "If I knew some one who had sinned as I have sinned! If I knew" (she gave a short, bitter laugh) "there was some one who understood sin, who had been taught to know what it means to a human soul, who had read the Psalms of David with science——"

"There is—there is!" Mary interrupted ear-

nestly. "The Catholic priests. You have saved me, in the goodness of your heart, from a terrible humiliation—the humiliation of asking money from the man who was to have been my husband. I owe you *everything*. And now, Madame Capella, I will tell you the truth: I was a suicide and a murderess at heart."

"You!" Madame Capella grasped her companion's arm tight. She didn't realize that Mary flinched in this vise-like grip. "Tell Dupré to stop! We must walk a little. Fresh air—fresh air!"

They descended to the sidewalk. The glow of the sunset made the avenue a place of beauty, and a light haze was over the city; every point in the architecture was either veiled or gilded.

"Go on!" said Madame Capella.

Mary found herself at liberty.

"I was wretched. Christ had been taken from me. I could not live, hopeless and a drudge; and I left my death to chance. But, worse than that, I resolved to murder this very man Spracht, and I was saved from the crime only by God Himself."

Madame Capella turned into a quiet side street.

"Jehovah is great, and His ways are wonderful," Madame Capella said in an awed tone. "I tried to kill the monster Spracht, and succeeded only in murdering Mr. Morton. Yes!" (Mary tried in vain to interrupt her)—"yes, His ways are wonderful and terrible. That I should have seen you by accident! That I should be healed by you! But" (she shivered), "for my crime

there is no real healing. To have blood on one's hands! No, no! You can't give me consolation by words. You shall hear horrors. Spracht was often at my brother-in-law's in Orvisville. There my husband met him. My husband is not a bad man, but he is—a man." She spoke bitterly. "A man of the world. Spracht, for all he poses as a friend of the people, is furious for money; he knows how to make it, and he can help others to make it. He got hold of my husband. I would hear of no transactions that were to be made through Spracht. My husband and I quarreled. Leipsiger has no patience, and I have a temper.

"At this juncture Spracht brought into the circle a beautiful and rich woman who wanted to be an actress," Madame Capella went on rapidly, with admirable distinctness, yet so low that no passer-by could hear a word. "*She* would not oppose his plans. Why should my husband not divorce me? Then Leipsiger could marry the rich woman with the pretty face and no brains, and Spracht could make her his tool. Spracht" (Madame Capella made a gesture of fury) "told my husband vile things, and he almost believed them. Who will speak well of an actress? The very people who applaud her will leave the theater glad to throw mud upon her. The mob! My husband almost believed them. And I said things to Leipsiger that *scorched* him. But hate entered my heart. I determined to kill the viper, and I sent for the poor Sandy McGill, whom all Orvisville knows. Well, I told him all; I gave him a good revolver—you know the rest. I murdered Mr. Morton. And Spracht suspects it.

He has tried to blackmail me. He doesn't *know,* but he is very near to knowing. He is aware that I protect the wretched McGill here in New York; and I will protect him until I die." Her face became suddenly old and yellow. "I fear it is the sin on my soul that haunts me by night and by day. I see McGill forced to confess the deed; and I—I—I must face the world, and shame my husband by saying, 'I am the murderess!' "

CHAPTER XXIX

PRESENTLY Madame Capella dragged Mary to the front of a window, and appeared to be examining little silver figures.

"You know what I feel; for you have sinned at heart. But you have found peace. How have you found it? You must tell me, and I will seek the same road—the same road! Spracht guesses, and one day he will gain a way to know; but I will never bend to him. And now I will defy him, and free this foolish girl. He has been divorced many times. The world knows it. Why do I dare to anger him for the sake of a silly woman?"

"I will go with you." Mary's voice was almost joyous. "I can help to return your kindness—your great, great kindness. If you are pleased with what I will say to Spracht, you will," she added earnestly, "throw your life at the feet of Christ and His Mother, who are so near to us."

"Oh, save me! That is all I ask."

"We will go to Spracht."

"To the Windermere Hotel?"

Madame Capella seemed to have caught hope from Mary's words.

A moment after they had started in the car Mary laid her arm on Madame Capella's hesitatingly.

"But why should you go to Spracht? Mazie Verney is so dazzled by your promise that she will keep away from him."

"No," said Madame Capella, clasping her hands dramatically—"no! It is a penance. I will face him. Let him do his worst. At least I shall force him to say what he suspects."

Mary, who had a quick intelligence, understood that the feeling of Madame Capella was real; she was forcing herself to do penance. At the same time the prospect of a dramatic struggle with Spracht, in the presence of a sympathetic witness, was not without its attraction to her.

"Mary," she said, "if he does not know—if he has not discovered the truth—I promise to follow the Light. It will be hard; for your Church asks much—much. But I will sacrifice all except my art—and that is never required—for peace. If it were not for you, I could not believe there was peace for any one like myself. But I will face this monster. I was mad when I urged poor McGill to right his wrongs and mine, and to take his revenge. I was mad! But I swear that I will take the full guilt before the world rather than that this wretched man shall suffer. If the bullet had killed Spracht!" Her eyes blazed. "If the bullet had ended his life! But no, no, my friend, I should still be a murderess. Save me by your prayers from thinking of Spracht's death—of longing for it, and being a murderess at heart." Tears rolled down the face of the actress; she was suffering intensely. "How can God forgive me? How do I know that He will forgive me? You have found peace. Help me!"

Mary put her hand into the right hand of the actress.

"We stand at great risk when we do not trust

Our Lord," she said, unconsciously echoing the words of Thomas à Kempis. "If our wills are with Him, we may trust Him to do as He pleases with us."

"But I can't!" Madame Capella caught both of Mary's hands in her own. "I can't! I can't do anything until the stain of blood is taken from my soul, and the fear and hatred of Spracht from my heart."

"But, Madame Capella" (Mary was brought to earth by the stopping of the car), "the place to see this awful man is not in the drawing room of a hotel."

"There are several little parlors. I shall ask for one. I must have it over, now that I am in the mood."

"I hope that he is not there."

"Mary's heart became faint—but of a sudden a light came into her face. She had been so confused by her emotions during this peculiar drive that she had not been able to think logically. Now a light came upon her, and for a moment she rejoiced over what was, she was sure, about to happen if these two met. She saw (Mary was beginning to live—not for herself, but through those she loved) that this actress was at heart true and genuine even when she was acting; and something like a smile crossed her lips as she imagined what might occur.

Madame Capella demanded of the magnificent attendant in the marble hall of the Windermere to be shown to a small parlor, and there she sent up her card to Mr. Spracht. She made her way slowly—not unobserved—to a small room, very

rococo in its decorations. The fat golden roses and wreathed pillars looked down on tapestries woven with Grecian scenes.

"I've 'paged' Mr. Spracht. He's not in his room, but I've seen him lately in the lobby," said the boy in buttons.

After a short pause, Spracht, in a morning coat and holding a tall hat in his hand, entered.

"Charmed, ladies!" The accent had become modified, his figure was more erect; he was no longer the leader of the masses, but a man about town. His thick underlip, his unhealthy pallor, and the insolent gleam in the eyes had marked him as a fungus growth among men. This was Madame Capella's thought. "An honor," he said. "Present me, Madame—oh, Miss Coyne, from Orvisville? You were once engaged to that lout of a Trevanion. You did right to throw him over. May I sit down?"

Mary blushed furiously.

"I came, Mr. Spracht," Madame Capella began, "to say that I am about to interfere in one of your matrimonial affairs."

"Which one?" he asked, with a grin.

"I have taken Mazie Verney under my jurisdiction." Madame Capella visibly enjoyed the sight of the rage that came into his face.

"You?"

Then he laughed.

"You are attempting to do a very foolish and useless thing. The girl is devoted to me, and I shall make her my wife."

"For how long?"

"That will be as it suits me."

"You are shameless!" said Madame Capella.

"No more shameless than many ladies and gentlemen of your profession. And there was a time, Mrs. Leipsiger, when your husband would have found a legal way of parting from you had he listened to me."

This threat seemed to take Madame Capella's power of speech from her, it was so cruel, so arrogant, so unexpected. The dramatic scene anticipated by the actress was a failure. All Mary's courage rose. She could not realize that the words coming from her lips were her own.

"In revenge, Mr. Spracht"—she looked straight into the eyes of this repulsive man, who sneered at her—"in revenge, Mr. Spracht, take under your protection my old friend, Mr. Sandy McGill—if you can find him."

Madame Capella looked at her friend with her eyes open with horror.

"I shall find him one day, and then I shall know things—things that I suspect, things that I have long suspected, things that I know. Look at the woman's face! You came here as her friend, but you have suddenly become her enemy. I know who urged the fool McGill to fire the bullet at me that killed Morton. You thought you would get even with me for doing your husband a kindness in supplying your place with a more beautiful woman——"

Mary put her arms about the actress.

"Courage! Trust me!" she whispered.

Madame Capella caught the cue. The world seemed blank, but she saw again Mary and herself at the foot of the Consoling Mother, and she

childishly trusted. She threw her head back and stood in a superbly dignified attitude before Spracht. Even at that moment she saw herself, with a thrill of approval, in the heavily carved mirror on the opposite wall.

Spracht laughed again.

"A grand *scena*, Madame Capella! We shall soon know the last act. It may end with an execution. You ought to have learned to die well by this time."

"No fear! I shall die well when my time comes."

"It may come sooner than you think. The bullet that killed Morton——"

"Mr. Spracht," Mary interrupted him. He stared at her angrily. "Mr. Spracht, you can not have heard the coroner's verdict or read Dr. Vernon's testimony. Mr. Morton was not murdered. The bullet was not fatal. Dr. Vernon said that he was in a state of health—you'll find the Latin word in the newspapers—that made him very weak, and that he had been shocked in some way that led to his death. But it seems that he could hardly have felt the slight wound inflicted by the bullet. It's all in the report. The rumors against Sandy McGill are only rumors; and if he did fire the shot, it was harmless. I am speaking the truth."

Madame Capella turned her face for a moment.

"Ah," Mary went on, "you must have said something that shocked him."

"I did." Spracht seemed to enjoy the retrospect. "I hated that man. He used me as a tool, and treated me as a slave; and I really think

I killed him when I told him that I had concluded to play my own game, and force a strike when *I* chose. You might just as well know this. You are probably right about the inquest. Children and fools like you always speak the truth. He made himself even. In his will he threw money to me as he would throw a poisoned bone to a dog. He almost ruined me. But, then, I helped to *kill* him!"

Spracht rose, brushed his hat, and laughed and went to the doorway.

"My dear Mrs. Leipsiger, you will no longer suffer from my threats. It was very agreeable to make you suffer; for you are the guardian of Abe's precious money-boxes—and a fierce guardian. But you will not suffer any more that way, and you can keep the idiotic shop-girl that caught my fancy for a moment. But this you will regret all your life. As an actress, my dear lady, it will haunt you. You failed to take the center of the stage at the right moment. For once in your life you *failed.* A little Jersey peasant has all the honor of your grand scene. Your powers are failing, Bianca; you are growing old. Take my advice, Bianca: let your husband divorce you, and he'll find somebody younger. As for you, Miss Coyne, you've made a stroke by simply telling a fact that Mrs. Leipsiger and a lot of other people overlooked. I'll pay a little more attention to that silly sister of yours and her equally silly husband. No more pleasantries! I haven't time. I go to dress for dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Morton will be my guests. I shall telephone

for them at once. You see, Miss Coyne, that after all Spracht is Spracht!"

He went out smiling.

"Oh, Madame Capella, he can't hurt Amy! You don't think he can hurt Amy?"

"No," said Madame Capella, with a long sigh —a sigh of relief—"no. Trevanion has a strong hand and a kind heart, after all, and he will see to that. My husband has always told me that he frightened Spracht from Orvisville. It can't be true—it can't be true! I haven't killed a man!"

"I should have told you the truth about the inquest, Madame Capella, but I was confused. Your duty is to tell that poor, half-crazed McGill and let him go back to the priests at Orvisville. No doubt he has suffered, too."

"Oh, I could fly! I could ascend to heaven to thank God! But the stain is on my soul still, Mary. How shall I begin to wipe it off?"

"I will show you the place of cleansing." Mary very often dropped into the phraseology of the Bible. "You will learn what it means to be sorry, to confess, and to be consoled. It is by way of the cathedral, where He dwells."

Bianca Capella, a new desire in her heart, followed her guide meekly.

CHAPTER XXX

MOLLY TREVANION had been kindness itself during the days that succeeded the death of her husband's father. All differences between Trevanion and herself seemed to have been forgotten. Mary Coyne was frequently with Mrs. Trevanion in the evenings of these days of sorrow, and Molly learned to admire her sincerity and simplicity. Trevanion had told her of his engagement and its breaking off; but Molly was too broad-minded, too sure of herself—shall we say "too modern"?—to have any feeling other than curious interest for the woman who had been her rival. Later she loved Mary.

Once or twice Molly asked herself, "How could she ever have distrusted George in any great matter?" She herself did not distrust him. She knew that he had disappointed her, but she knew, too, that, allowing for the state of public opinion in her own country, she had expected too much from him. He was kind and strong; but how many kind and strong men were there who believed that it was their stern duty to make money grow from money! To condemn that duty as wrong would be to brand him as "un-American." Her father had often said: "Molly, I shall never let you marry a man who isn't rich. If an American at thirty-five is not fairly well off or on the way to riches, it means that he has no real money value; and, with men of common sense, nothing counts to-day except money. You can't pay for

good music or build churches or hospitals without money. Poverty or a struggling existence means weakness."

In all her father's circle there was no dissenting opinion. When Morton's brother Welby lost a great slice of his fortune by a collapse in sugar, his wife asked for a divorce, because he was not able to support her in the style to which she had been accustomed. She had during the earlier years of her life earned a frugal existence by teaching in a district school; but after she had become Mrs. Welby Morton two thousand dollars a month was necessary for her existence. Nobody had condemned her—that is, nobody in Molly's circle—except Mrs. Welterman and the idealistic Isaac. And Molly did not condemn Trevanion for his views about money. People in Orvisville were gauged according to what they could buy or what they did buy. Of course this standard was not openly discussed; the newspapers wrote, like Emerson, about the beauties of the simple life. Oh, yes, the beauties of the simple life! And they often said not only that a man was a man "for a' that," but they went further than Bobby Burns and announced frequently that a man was more of a man "for a' that" Their language on that point was always beautiful.

At the school in which Molly had been instructed none but the daughters of wealthy parents could be received. No one talked of money; but bankers and railway presidents were always supposed to belong to "good" families, and the boast of the school was that only daughters of

"good" families could be received. Molly, then, from her education, was in no frame of mind to detest violently Trevanion's desire to make the most of money, and to found one of the richest families in America, with the "boy" at its head. She had believed that he was different from the good and respectable people around him, and she was disillusioned—that was all.

One night as they sat with Mrs. Trevanion (Molly had brought her violin), Mary Coyne said.

"I believe that you, Mrs. Trevanion, have 'the passion for perfection'—I have learned those words from one of our Catholic books."

"Do you really mean that?" (Molly blushed with pleasure.) "Oh, you dear! I can't endure anything less than perfection in my music, even if it is only a little phrase I must play. That is why I hold the 'cello in such reverence. It requires a genius to get a perfect tone from the 'cello."

"I meant as to life—I meant that you had the passion for a perfect life."

Molly shook her head.

"Perhaps I have; but, you see, I have never been taught what the perfect life is. We Protestants have no saints. I must confess that Emerson has done a lot for me—though there's no harmony in him; he's all treble."

"I don't know," said Mary, puzzled. "But perfection in the love of God is the great thing."

Molly didn't answer. She began to play, with great breadth of tone, the "March of the Men of Harlech," so loved by Mrs. Trevanion.

In the meantime Trevanion became more and more dissatisfied with himself. The praise he had lived on in the beginning began to cloy him. Nevertheless, if a day passed without some complimentary allusion to him in the local press, there was "really nothing in the papers." And he turned over the New York journals in disgust; for they, too, had almost forgotten him, after they had good-naturedly hailed him as an uplifter of the downtrodden and a leader of the just. He believed very firmly that he was both. A sense of his own justice, the result of a well-spent life, never failed him. He took praise as a matter of course; and, like a steady diet of partridge, it tired him. Nevertheless, he missed it if it ceased to come.

Suddenly he was awakened. The traction company, in which Morton had been a leading stockholder, and in which Carlin also had interests, made a stroke in the Councils, and a great part of what ought to have been public property —ground, in fact, on which Orvisville had an option for a public park—fell into the hands of the company. This stroke meant much to Carlin. As a public park the place would be dead to the crowds who attended picnics, enlivened by whiskey or beer. As a private park it meant that Carlin and the others interested would be enabled to call the place "Paradise" or "Luna" or an "Inland Coney Island," and extract coin from its sylvan beauties, improved by the sale of hot sausages, and cold beer, and enlivened by such proceedings as, in our times, make the groves of Daphne attractive. To veto the bill meant, for



the mayor, the withdrawal of several big contracts already promised. It meant, too, that the trolley line could not be made to pass near five hundred cottages recently built by him for his workmen, and rented to them at an excellent profit. He knew that his veto would mean acclamations from the Socialists, who stood at present for the material well-being of the people.

Father Cook opposed the scheme because it meant, in a factory town, organized carnivals of vice. Dr. Wortley agreed with him, because, he said, picnic grounds retarded the culture and mental progress of the masses; Mr. Jensen, because it would attract the idle young man and the pleasure-loving young girl to meet at a place where "drinks" were sold. Eliminate the "drinks" and Mr. Jensen, in whose pews most of the Select Council sat, would have no objection. Arthur March, almost alone, cried out, whenever there was a chance, that unless the Mayor vetoed the bill he would be guilty of the direct theft of a breathing place, so much needed in a growing industrial town. When Trevanion read Arthur's word "theft" in print, he signed the bill. Then the storm broke. The New York papers, echoing a trenchant letter of Spracht, who saw his chance, fell upon the Mayor of Orvisville. He was no longer the "white-haired boy" of his journalistic nurses. He became all at once a full-grown demon. Pictures, not creditable to his honesty, were made by caricaturists. The local press trampled upon him. The Select and Common Councils and the trolley road were forgotten. It was the petted, the "pure" Aristides

of Orvisville who had sold the people! Arthur March, in a long letter, tried to throw the blame on Carlin and the political leaders. It was in vain.

Trevanion was invited to commit hara-kiri; to hide his head among the despots of the benighted East. The local band even went so far as to play "The Rogue's March," as if by accident, when it passed his house on the way to the anniversary celebrations.

All this aroused the spirit of Trevanion's mother, which had been almost crushed by the death of her husband. At first she was angry with her son.

"It's to build fine houses and tombstones after you're gone that you're doing this! I went to the graveyard yesterday, and when I saw the great tombstone, with praying angels, you've put up over 'Ivy Hedge Morton,' I said to myself that I'd rather see my man lying under the plain grass, as he is, than crushed down by the weight of the ill-gotten marble. I mind me of one of the stories of our old clergyman, David Vach. Dave was a hard-working man, like your father, but he got little good out of it. The times were against a good man who knew only how to work and be humble. And when the minister tried to find a place in the cemetery for Dave, there was none to be found. There were towering tombs everywhere—broken crosses and spires, angels and urns; but hardly a spot for old, thin, tired Dave to get into. The place was like a grove of granite and white marble. But at last a little spot was found; and the old minister didn't preach: he

stood still, looking down at the narrow, neat mound of clay, and he just said: 'Well, David Vach, you've had a narrow time right through life, and you have a narrow place in death. But never mind, old friend! I can see a day dawning when you will rise out of your narrow bed and call out to all those big people, "Elbow-room for the poor!" ' And don't you, Georgie, be one of those that are to be elbowed out of the way when the Great Day comes. Oh, my son, why did you do it?" she asked, her bright, keen old eyes blinking a little.

"To tell the truth, mother," he replied, "I hated to lose money on those houses. But, more than that, Arthur March *dared* me to do it."

Mrs. Trevanion chuckled.

"After all," she said, "you're something like me. I never *would* take a dare."

Whenever she read or heard of a deadly insult hurled at the Mayor, her son, she found a parallel text of denunciation in the Scriptures and cast it at his enemies; for blood is thicker than water, and she loved the scent of battle. Finally the Mayor became so unpopular—he was threatened with impeachment by a faction, influenced by Spracht—that he confined himself to routine work; and just before the time of the nominations, when the would-be impeachers had thrown up their case, he resigned.

Molly would not allude to the subject. She discouraged all attempts to talk about the political declension of her husband. At first she was horrified, then secretly rejoiced. She began to perceive that Trevanion had been shocked out of

the conviction, which the sudden advent of riches had fostered, that he was infallible.

On a Sunday afternoon in the spring Molly saw Trevanion roll up a newspaper and toss it angrily into the waste-basket. She had just entered his study, and this little piece of energetic action was reflected in the mirror at the side.

"I'm sick of life, and tired of everything except you and the kid," he said. "I'm the most misrepresented man in the country!"

"Naturally," she replied. "It happens to us all sometimes. We must take the world merely as the world."

"Shakespeare said that, I suppose; but it's hard. Were you walking?"

"Yes. The daffodils are up—lovely little green pegs upside down. I've been to Vespers and a sermon at the Catholic church."

Trevanion frowned.

"Do you know, I am coming to realize that that old Church is beginning to appear everywhere? Welterman tells me that his Isaac has gone into a priests' college, and his mother doesn't seem to mind. Think of it! The son of a Jew and Jewess becoming an apostate!"

"Now, George!" she said, smiling—she had been smiling at him often of late. "You don't know what the word 'apostate' means. And if you did, it wouldn't apply here. Isaac Welterman has never been a Jew in religion; he is, like his wife, simply a Jew in race, which to-day is an entirely different thing. The Son of God was the Son of a Virgin of the House of David."

Trevanion started, and looked up.

"Molly, do you know it never occurred to me until now that you were really a Christian—I mean," he added hastily, "you have never talked much about your beliefs. I have always thought that you had no beliefs, only very strong opinions."

"I don't think I knew the difference myself until lately." She took off her hat and opened her violin case. "I shall try the Plain Chant. Here's a bit of the *Magnificat*—though it wasn't made for the fiddle."

He listened, his face gradually gaining the old look of strength and goodness.

"It's fine," he said. "Do you know, Molly, that this—this—but you won't let me talk about it—this—shock——"

"The decline and fall," she added, drawing little trills from her violin. "Go on!"

"Has made me feel that I am not worth much."

"You're worth more than ever to me!"

"Molly!"

She ran through the first few lines of the "Amaryllis" and said:

"George!"

He liked the sound in her voice. It echoed the spring-like note in the music. It was like the first sweet rain of April to him.

"I've been thinking a great deal of late." She put down the violin and leaned against the piano; her eyes, with a glad light in them, fixed on him. "Father Waldron gave me a clue to-day."

Trevanion lost his look of joy.

"As I have just said, the Catholic Church

claims too much, Molly. You'd better keep away from it. You can't have much respect for an organization that sends these mobs of pagan Sicilians into this town—from a Catholic country. That ought to be enough. They are simply heathens!"

"For us to sweat in the works," she answered quietly.

"They're a menace to Protestant civilization."

"My dear, you *must* have some gleam of reason in you, although you're only a man. Have you ever lived in certain districts in the South? Do you know White Pine Crown, where papa's hunting lodge used to be? Have you heard how most of the Protestant Negroes there live? Suppose we Protestants cease for a while to throw stones at the Catholics in Italy until we have Christianized White Pine Crown. I've been to hear a sermon on 'St. Francis of Assisi,' and I find that I am in love with perfection."

"Then you'll have to leave me out, Molly," he said rather wistfully.

She ran toward him.

"Oh, my dear," she whispered, "I love you when you look—well—as if you were a little boy —and lost——"

"I have been lost," he answered. "Molly, you were right: we must be different enough from other people—" he broke down lamely—"to live for other people."

Her eyes shone. She picked up her violin and played some phrases from the *Magnificat*.

"If you are willing, Molly, let us give fifty acres of land beyond The Hills to the city, to

make up for what I helped to—to—steal from them."

He set his lips tightly—it was hard to say.

Softly Molly played the chant. Her eyes were hidden by their lids. She did not want her husband to see her tears.

"And——"

"This good St. Francis will teach us what else to do," she said.

The strains of the *Magnificat* rose louder. She turned to conceal her tears.

"I will look for the daffodils!" he exclaimed, going rapidly from the room.

She followed him just as rapidly. A few minutes later they were dancing like two children on the sprouting roots that remained of the Ivy Hedge.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE affairs of "Madeline La Clare et Cie," as the firm called itself on paper, began to prosper. The shrewd Madame Capella forgot her caprices and put aside her acting when she entered the atelier and became Mrs. Abe Leipsiger.

"My wife takes to religion as if she had met a new friend," Mr. Leipsiger said to Welterman. "I wish she had done it years ago. She really seems to think she has duties. There was a time when she had only passions and prejudices. And she is cheerful, too. Sometimes she declares that she ought to have been the Mother Abbess of a convent. What do you say to that?"

"If I know anything about Bianca, I'd pity the convent!" Welterman said dryly. Seeing fire in Leipsiger's eye, he went on hastily: "I don't object to religion, but I don't like the kind that one must be thinking of every day in the week, and that's always interfering with the little ways that you are used to. Ikey's got that kind. Be religious on the Sabbath, I've always said. If you take care of the Sabbath, the Sabbath will take care of you during the rest of the week. And there's Trevanion knocked out of the mayoralty just because he made a little deal that benefited us all. What does he do? Does he hit back? No! He just gets under the influence of impractical religious people, and wastes his money in profit-sharing. What do a lot of his men do? They're

so pleased with the prospect that they go off and marry. That's all it comes to. Instead of being able to get cheap labor, and have a strike or two when you were over-producing, we'll all have to pay what he calls 'living wages.' It's nothing short of immoral, I say. His underhand tricks have killed the big idea of the most splendid department store in the world. And Bianca turned you against it."

"Suppose we leave Bianca out of the question?" observed Leipsiger, chewing the end of his cigar. "I know what you think of Bianca; and, before she got into what she calls a 'state of grace,' she told me pretty frequently what she thought of *you*. Now she just says you are too insignificant to be talked about." (Welterman gasped.) "She's taking a cool ten per cent. out of Madame Madeline's shop, which you made your Julia give up. I just came in to say, in a friendly way, that Ikey is a brick, no matter what you say against his religion; but that Herman had better be kept in college or put in jail. I will not have him loafing about my stage door with that fool of a Jack Morton. I won't put up with it a day longer, I tell you. They're both half drunk most of the time. If Herman were anybody else's son——"

"Herman is just sowing a few wild oats—that's all. You're an old woman, Leipsiger!"

"All right! That's the way you people talk. But if you encourage that cub of yours in idleness by giving him money, don't blame anybody but yourself if I lose my temper some day and boot him out of my place."

And Leipsiger went off, haughtily raising his hat.

"Julia's put him up to it. Herman's being led astray by that brute of a young Morton."

Molly was soon informed of the complaint that Leipsiger had made. Welterman was only too glad to tell of the insidious way in which Morton was undermining the morals of his son. She went over to call on Mary Coyne, whom she regarded as a wise young woman. Mary was reading in the parlor of her mother's apartment.

"Something must be done about Jack, and I've been thinking that you might help by rousing Amy's spirit."

Mary closed her book, drew the curtains, and put Molly into a big chair before uttering more than a few words of welcome. There was such a smiling deliberation about her actions that Molly marvelled.

"One would think you had nothing to worry about, Mary."

"You have left me very little. To provide for the present and future of Hubert and Walter as you have done has removed a frightful weight from my mind. I feel grateful every time I think of it."

"It was so easy! You see, Trevanion let me turn that big house over to the Home for Old Working Men and Women. He realized that the boy and I didn't need fifty thousand dollars a year to live on. No social position is worth *that.*" (Molly raised a very happy face.) "And, of course, it's easy to pay Jack's income and your mother's stipend and live fairly well. We don't

keep eighteen servants now. They were in one another's way. I've come about Jack and Amy."

Mary sat down and clasped her hands, not speaking for several moments.

"Oh, I was so unhappy about them! You know how childish Amy is—how carried away by the frenzy of the time for amusements. And Spracht threatened to strike me through her." (Mary shuddered.) "It would have been easy, with Amy's ignorance, thoughtlessness, and love of luxury and gaiety, to help him—easy enough, indeed. Sometimes we are so utterly helpless, even when we love most; and Heaven knows I've loved Amy with all my heart ever since she was a little baby!"

Molly nodded. She thought, with a pang, of her own brother Jack. Had she ever loved him enough—as much as her music, as much as what she called her independence?

"I know—I know!" she said. "But you often find that the little brother who seemed so much like you, so easy to understand, grows up and becomes a stranger—so much of a stranger that you don't seem to speak the same language. Even parents find this so. What can be done? How could I have influenced Jack? He was told that he must sow his wild oats, as the saying is. I tell you the world is all against boys; it takes them to itself, and public opinion pushes them forward until they are lost."

"It is that way not only with boys, but with girls, I assure you," Mary said sadly. "I felt as if Amy had actually raised a wall against me. She had become so frivolous and—well, what old-

fashioned people would call 'fast.' What could I do? My work claimed me every day. Besides, I bored her by my seriousness; and so I put the case before my saints—St. Francis of Assisi and the two saints who knew this world well and were so near to the other world—St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal."

Molly looked amazed, and then laughed outright.

"Oh, you dear, simple soul!" she exclaimed.

"Simple soul or not, it worked—worked to perfection."

"This is better than Christian Science at its best."

"Much better—I can assure you of that. Today Amy rushed into our place in New York. 'I've wired to our uncle in the West,' she said. 'I shall take Jack away from this town and make him work. We must get away from here and make a fresh start. I'm sick of all this froth myself; and, if Molly will only give us a start, we'll go in for sheep farming.' "

"Give them a start? Of course I will—anything to get them out of the vicious circle of their friends. I am so glad of the proposed change—blessed change! But why sheep farming?"

"Amy read about it in a magazine, and the uncle made money through sheep in the Argentine. Mother took the boys over to visit the Marches after dinner; and I am waiting for Jack and Amy to come, with their plans for the future fully developed."

Molly leaned back in her chair and laughed again.



"It will take a lot to make a man of Jack. And you think your saints have done all this?"

"I have told you so."

Molly looked serious.

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. I begin to believe that. You Catholics are a strange lot—but sensible, after all, and logical. If it is not worth while to pray, what's the use of praying at all? You think it is worth while. St. Francis of Assisi certainly thought so; and his virtues are as real as those of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, aren't they?"

The bell rang. Mary touched a button, and the inner door flew open. Amy, attired in a traveling dress, entered; Jack followed her, gaily imitating the shrieks of a locomotive.

"You here, Molly! We were just talking of you." He kissed his sister. "You won't smell cloves this time, Moll; I'm on the water wagon."

"I call that *vulgar.*"

Amy took off her long feather boa, tossed it on the nearest chair, and threw her arms about Mary.

Jack went on:

"It's the picturesque language of the sheep ranch. I say, Moll, I'm booked for the barbarous life, and I think I'm going to win; in fact, I'm sure of it. Amy threatened me." (He winked.) "Her language was 'awful indeed.'"

"What I *do* say is this," observed Amy firmly. "Since I spoiled my educational career for this man, and since education and culture roll off him like water off a duck's back, we've no business among fashionable people. Only the cultured

have a right to belong to the leisure classes; and, since I broke off my course in the high school, I can never, never hope for culture. It's work for us—and hard, honest work. Mother nearly had a fit when I told her that to-day; but I can assure you I was much happier broiling chops for poor dad in the old kitchen than I have been any time since. And Jack's got to learn this if he expects me to stick to him."

"My dears," said Molly, kissing them both, "I love you so much! Only try hard to make good, and I'll help you all I possibly can."

Then all of a sudden Amy began to cry—sobbing aloud. And her tears were hardly dried before Mrs. Coyne and the boys entered. Jack Morton, who had just been lectured into a state of great sensibility by Amy, was drying his eyes and trying to appear natural.

CHAPTER XXXII

MRS. COYNE, attired in mauve and lavender, with what seemed to be a fluffy paintbrush sticking up from her hat, took in the scene at once.

"You may well blubber, Jack Morton!" she began. "You've ruined my daughter's career—that's what you've done. Everybody knows that *I* never intended her to marry you."

"We had bread and the nicest raspberry jam ever you tasted at Mrs. March's," said Walter confidingly from beneath his white eyelashes at Mary.

"And sponge cake!" added Hubert artlessly.

Mrs. Coyne promptly stopped the two boys, who retired behind Mary's chair, and remained quiet.

"I planned an intellectual career for my daughters—a career befitting the daughters of a clergyman. I slaved myself to death. What happens? One marries into a wealthy family, preferring the fleshpots of Egypt to the higher life; and just when she has a chance of being in the best society, and having everything that money can buy, she rushes off out West, to be dependent on one of my relatives——"

"Not at all!" Molly cut in. She could not help thinking that prosperity and all the conveniences of the new apartment house had deprived Mrs. Coyne of the frugal dignity of former days.

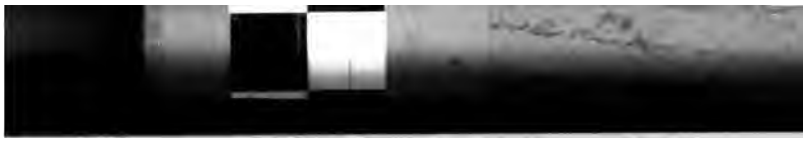
"Jack and Amy will have a good start and a reasonable income. Amy is doing the right thing, I think, by going to her uncle, who must know the country and the ways of the country very well."

"But do you think, after all that I've done, that I can sleep at night (I've often dreamed that I saw Amy in her graduation dress, receiving the plaudits of the best people in Orvisville) when I know that my child is driving sheep to water in blizzards, and at evening breaking the ice for them to drink? She who might be reading her valedictory to-day, or at least driving in her own motor car! And Mary? What can I expect from Mary? She's good, I admit; but she might be the daughter of an emigrant, to judge her by her tastes. Instead of playing nice pieces on the piano in a gentle way, she's off with Madeline La Clare, the daughter of our washerwoman! I call it un-American!"

"Mother," cried Amy, "you forget that even my 'diploma' wouldn't have saved the boys from an institution! Let us be glad that your home is not broken up."

"You're upset," interposed Jack. "We're going to be the richest people in our part of the country—Amy and I. You'll come and visit us."

"The truth is," said Mrs. Coyne, mollified, "you never did understand me, but I'd have died sooner than broken up my home. Arthur March, Molly, is going to marry Madeline La Clare, and look after the business in New York; the mother



has just told me. And I heard Mrs. March say that you're giving up, Mary. Is it true?"

"Yes." Mary was helping Amy with the tea-cups. "I intended to tell you to-night. Molly here has left me nobody to work for, so I'm going to Italy for a while with Madame Capella."

"What for?" asked her mother sharply. "I hope that you're not thinking of being an Italian nun! It's un-American, I say. I've suspected *that* since Mrs. Trevanion said that you would make a good Sister. One daughter feeding sheep and another walled in among Dagos!"

"Drink your tea, mother!" commanded Amy.

"You're going to the Portiuncula," whispered Molly, "to pray at the tomb of St. Clara——"

"For light," responded Mary. "I must learn how to love God by giving myself to Him and His children. It is the only way for me. And if I learn that lesson I shall have the satisfaction of feeling that I have done my best to resolve in a small way the problem of our lives."

Mrs. Coyne, more placid for an interval, sipped her tea.

"Quince roll!" murmured Hubert to his brother. "We haven't had quince roll since the day father died."

"It was bully!" murmured the innocent Walter.

"I can't have you dropping tears in your tea!" said Amy. "Mother, you'd try the patience of a saint! You mustn't mind what children say."

"Race is race," responded Mrs. Coyne faintly. "You always did understand me better than any one else, Amy. I know I'm too sensitive."

There was silence.

A smile crossed Mary's face.

"There is one thing I have promised to do. When I paid Mrs. Trevanion's hundred dollars back (you know it all, Molly?) she took it only on condition that I'd go over to New York with her for a solid week of music. Think of it! One dream of her life—the dear old soul!—will be fulfilled."

"If I hadn't my music I'd go mad, I sometimes think, Mary." Molly took her hand. "The misery of the world oppresses me, and I can do so little! The times are all wrong. When I begin to look and *see,* I feel that a great change is impending. Who respects the law to-day? All decisions are examined and attacked. It reminds me of that strange time before the French Revolution, when the trial of Beaumarchais showed how reverence had departed from France. I'm not learned, you know; but I've had to read up, because I'm studying the first violin part in 'The Marriage of Figaro.' There's a storm coming, I feel certain of it, and the way out of the turmoil seems closed."

Mary went over to the side table and opened a little book—at a page in the "Countess Cathleen."

"Read this," she said.

And Molly read:

"He never closed a door
Unless one opened. I am desolate.
Because of a strange thought that's in my heart.
But I have still my faith. Therefore be silent;
For surely He does not forsake the world,

But stands before it, modeling in the clay,
And molding there His image. Age by age,
The clay wars with His fingers, and pleads hard
For its old heavy, dull and shapeless ease.
But sometimes—though His hand is on it still—
It moves away, and demon hordes are born."

"Demon hordes!" repeated Molly. "There are many Sprachts. But, as Trevanion says, we *must* fight."

"We must fight," said Mary, remembering, without a pang, the time when Trevanion and she had said this among the ruins of their world. "We must fight—each in his own way."

"And you will go for strength to the tomb of St. Clara!" Molly sighed. "You know best. And after that?"

* * * * *

Nearly at sunset on the next day, when the western sky was dropping a curtain of larkspur purple across the radiant begonia pink above the horizon's bar of flashing gold, Trevanion and Molly stood on The Hills. They could see the groups of "commuters" hurrying from the station, laden with packages, exchanging greetings, and bustling into carriages and automobiles; there were groups of guests from New York, to be in time for the hunt, dinner and ball. The hunt was gradually becoming an institution, and several of the arrivals showed red jackets under their overcoats. When Welby Morton, Molly's uncle, came down to the hunt, he always wore his "pink" (as he called it) as a mark of his sportsmanship. The Weltermans' car passed, a

gay group overfilling it. It was to be a gala night on The Hills.

"All the tiaras of the grand-ducal families will be worn at the ball. But you'll not be there. Really, Molly, aren't you giving up too much? Welterman tells me that the cost of the decorations will be tremendous."

Molly smiled.

"There will be a competition drill of the tiaras. Whose is the biggest now? Mr. Reginald Haricourt and Lady Alicia Crawford, having no tiaras, will be the judges; and to-morrow the *Gazette* will chronicle the glories of rank and privilege and wealth. And there will be more discontent in the town among what Major Walcott calls 'the lower classes;' and a greater desire for tiaras and what they represent among 'the middle classes,' to which the grandees insist that people with limited means, like Major Walcott, belong."

"It *is* rotten! But you know, Molly, if something really good hadn't spoken within me, backed by you, I'd never have been content to take our little house, and give up all the display in which our neighbors delight. The beggar who climbs on horseback must have a very strong grip not to ride to——"

Molly gently put both her hands over his mouth.

"There's Mrs. Coyne," he went on. "See what ease and comfort and a kind of luxury have done for her. She has become querulous, foolishly ambitious, and complaining. I'm convinced that you'll have to find some other way of making



people better than by placing them above all material worries."

"People must have decent houses to live in," said Molly decidedly. "It is hard for them to be civilized or moral if they're crowded together. We must build more new houses—with larger gardens, by the way. But if you make a woman like Mrs. Coyne idle by giving her leisure, you do her wrong. She is kept healthy in mind and body by reasonable work. When I saw Walter in a Highland costume and the other one in an up-to-date Lord Fauntleroy suit going to a children's party, I determined to transport that family back to the old house, where, owing to the opinion of the neighborhood, Mrs. Coyne will not be ashamed to let the boys tumble about in sensible, every-day clothes."

Trevanion chuckled.

"You're not a real uplifter! What becomes of her culture? She will not have time to go for her favorite novels to our famous library."

"She has 'Walter Scott' at home, and that's enough for any reading woman with housework to do—and the *Gazette!* Since your mother has come to live with us I've learned lots of things. There's one thing she can't teach me, though—and that is, what to do with the shiftless wives and daughters of the men in the oyster canning district. They are kindly black people, but they have neither religion nor morals. Talk of your Sicilians! And here's Mrs. Walcott wasting my time—two hours this morning—trying to make me contribute to the conversion of the Cubans! I once saw in Florida a congregation of French

nuns who had taught the Negro women the honest household arts in the frugal Norman way. I wish they could come here. Perhaps Mary Coyne may help later. I'm sick and tired of the paid uplifter!"

Trevanion looked at the darkening bar of gold, and smiled.

"Mrs. Coyne came to the office to-day to say that she was going back to the old house and garden. She was not without regrets at the failure of Amy's prospects. As she was going away she said that, like David, she was old and had been young, but never had she seen the children of the just deserted or their seed begging bread."

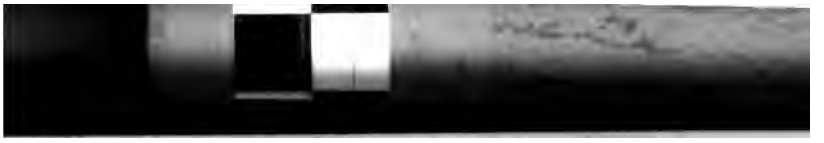
"It's a fine saying, but we are not all children of the just," replied Molly.

"I have heard
A sound of wailing in unnumbered hovels,
And I must go down, down—I know not where."

They stood where the ivy hedge had been, not far from the little house called the Lodge, where they now lived, and where the boy floated on the golden waves of love. The evening air was very still. They could hear the voices of two young men almost at the foot of the hill. Trevanion saw that they were on their way home from the works. They wore the blue "overalls" in vogue.

"That's George Trevanion!" he heard one of them say. "And that's his rich wife! They've gone out of their fine house to live almost as plainly as we do."

"What fools!" returned the other, in a high baritone. "They've given up what we're all



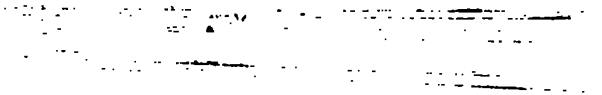
working for—and what we'll fight for after a while, if these blasted slave-drivers keep on bloodsucking our money from us. But the Trevanions are fools, all the same."

"There's gratitude!" said Trevanion, his kind eyes glowing fiercely. "We must fight——"

"We must fight against ourselves," replied Molly. "We must fight to lose ourselves in others and find God. We have begun: the ivy hedge is gone!"

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